


OCTOBER 1915

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THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE



A NEW NOVEL BY
MEREDITH NICHOLSON
-his first to be published serially-
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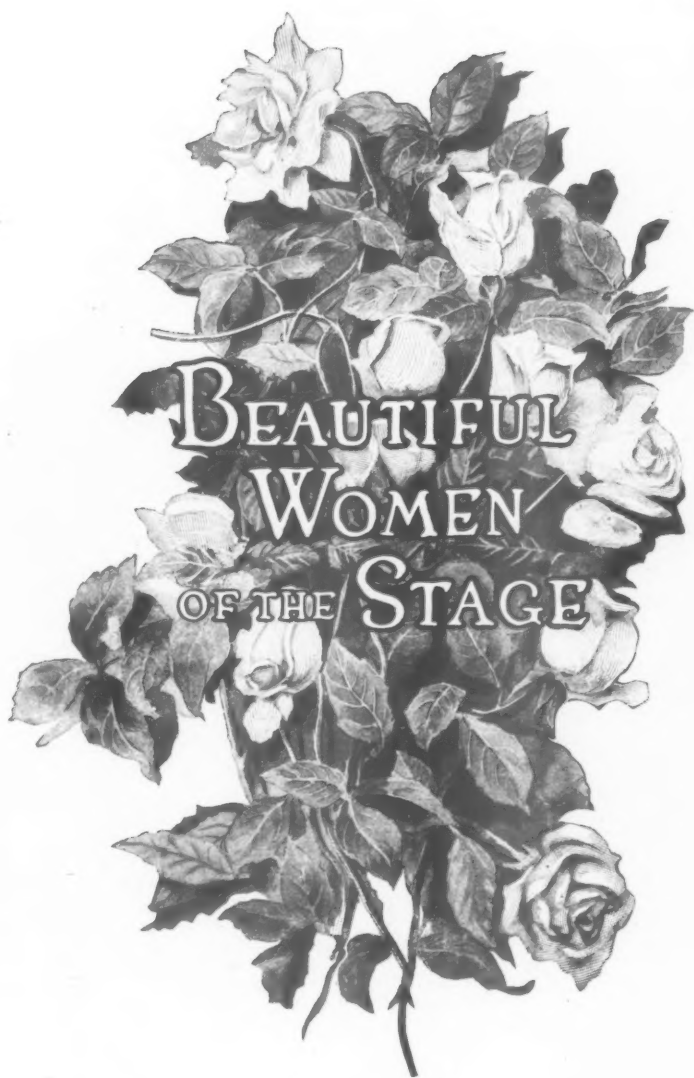
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"All night me
and Papa sit by
our baby. He
rolls and moans
on the bed, and
makes us prom-
ise the littly
white wagon
when he shall
die."



One of
**M. LEONE
BRACKER'S**
powerful illus-
trations for
"THE SCAB"

by Burke Knap-
pold. The story
which begins on
page 1166 of this
issue.

October
1915

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

Vol. XXV
No. 6

RAY LONG, Editor

"The Proof of the Pudding"

by

Meredith
Nicholson

THE first novel by Meredith Nicholson to appear serially before its appearance in book form begins on the next page. It is a great American story, with a willful, lovable heroine, a hero who could be of nowhere but our own Middle West, a host of other finely drawn characters, and a theme important enough to make you realize that when we call New York a modern Babylon, we are overlooking the "fast sets" that have become so much a part of life in the smaller cities of the country.

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IN THE MAGAZINE WORLD

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A Fine American Novel

By Meredith Nicholson

Author of "The House of A Thousand Candles," "The Port of Missing Men," "Otherwise Phyllis," "The Poet," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY C. H. TAFFS

CHAPTER I

A YOUNG LADY OF MOODS

IT was three o'clock, but the luncheon the Kinneys were giving at the Country Club had survived the passing of less leisurely patrons and now dominated the house. The negro waiters, having served all the food prescribed, perched on the railing of the veranda outside the dining-room, ready to offer further liquids if they should be demanded. Such demands had not been infrequent during the two hours that had intervened since the party sat down, as a row of empty champagne bottles in the club pantry testified. The negroes watched with discreet grins the antics of a girl of twenty-two who seemed to be the center of interest. She had been entertaining the company with a variety of impersonations of local characters—rising and moving about for the better display of her powers of mimicry. Hand-clapping and cries of "Go on!" followed each of these performances.

She concluded an imitation of the head waiter—a pompous individual who had viewed this impiety with mixed emotions—and sank exhausted into her chair amid boisterous laughter. The flush in her cheeks was not wholly attributable to the heat of the June day, and the eagerness with which she gulped

a glass of champagne one of the men handed her suggested a familiar acquaintance with that beverage.

"Now, Nan, give us Daddy Farley. Do old Uncle Tim cussing the doctor—put it all in—that's a good little Nan!"

"Go to it, Nan; we've got to have it!" cried Mrs. Kinney.

"I think it will kill me to hear it again," protested Billy Copeland, who was refilling the girl's glass; "but I'd be glad to die laughing. It's the funniest stunt you ever did."

The girl's arms hung limp, and she sat, a crumpled, dejected figure, glancing about frowningly with dull eyes.

"I'm all in; there's nothing doing," she replied tamely.

"Oh, come along, Nan. We'll go for a spin in the country right afterwards," said Mrs. Kinney—who had just confided to a guest from Pittsburgh, for whom the party was given, that Nan's imitation of Daddy Farley abusing his doctor was the killingest thing ever, and that she just must hear it.

Their importunities were renewed to the accompaniment of much thumping of the table, and suddenly the girl sprang to her feet. She seemed immediately transformed as she began a minute representation of the gait and speech of an old man.

"You ignorant blackguard! you common, low piece of swine-meat! How dare you come day after day to torture me



Nan Farley, "a very charming person," as John Cecil Eaton described her, "—a little devilish, but keen and amusing; she's too good for the crowd she's running with."

with your filthy nostrums! You've poured enough dope into me to float a battleship and given me pills enough to sink it, and here I am limpin' around like a spavined horse, and no more chance o' gettin' out o' here again than I have of goin' to Heaven! What's that? You got the cheek to offer to give up the case! Just like you to want to turn me over to some other pirate and keep me movin' till the undertaker comes along and hangs out the crape! There's been a dozen o' you flutterin' in here like hungry sparrows lookin' for worms. You don't see anything in my old carcass but worm-wood! Hi, you! What you up to now? Oh Lord, don't leave me! Come back here; come back here, I say! Oh my damned legs! How long you say I'd better take that poison you sent up here yesterday? Well, all right,"—meekly.—"I guess I'll try it. Where's that nurse gone? You better tell her again about the treatment. She forgets it half the time; tell her to double the dose. If I've got to die, I want to die full o' poison to make it easier for the embalmer. I guess you're all right, Doc; but you're slow, mighty damned slow. Hi, Nan, you grinnin' little fool, who told you to come in here? Oh, Lord! Oh, my poor legs! Oh, for God's sake, Doctor, do something for me—do something for me!"

She tottered toward her chair, imaginably the bed from which the old man had risen, and glanced at her audience indifferently, contemptuously even, as they broke into hilarious applause. The vulgarity of the exhibition was mitigated somewhat by her amazing success in sinking herself in another personality. They all knew that the man she was imitating was her foster-father and benefactor; that he had rescued her from obscure, hopeless poverty, educated her and given her his name; and that but for his benevolence they never would have known or heard of her; but this clearly was not a company that was fastidious in such matters. As an exhibition it had been highly diverting. They waved their napkins and demanded more.

She continued to survey them coldly, standing by her chair and absently biting her lip. Then she turned with an air of

disdain and moved among the tables to the nearest door with languid deliberation. They watched her dully, mystified. This possibly was a prelude to some further contribution to the hour's entertainment; and they craned their necks to follow her, expecting that at any moment she would turn back.

THE screen-door banged harshly upon her exit. She crossed the veranda, ran down the steps toward the canal that lay a little below the club-house, and hurried away as though anxious to escape pursuit or questioning. She came presently to the river, and pressed through a tangle of briars and threw herself on the bank under a broad sycamore.

A woodpecker drummed a dead limb of the tree, and a kingfisher looked down at her wonderingly. She lay perfectly quiet with her face buried in the grass. Hers was not a happy frame of mind. Torn with contrition, she yielded herself to the luxury of self-scorn. She had no intention of returning immediately to the club-house, and she was infinitely relieved that none of her late companions had followed her. She wished that she might never see them again. Then her mood changed and she sat up, flung aside her hat, dipped her handkerchief in the river and held it to her burning face.

"You little fool, you silly little fool!" she said, addressing her reflection in the water. She spoke as though quoting, which was indeed exactly what she was doing. It was just such endearing terms that her foster-father applied to her in his frequent fits of anger.

Then she stretched herself at ease with her hands clasped under her head and stared at the sky. Beneath the cloud of loosened black hair that her various exertions had shaken free, her violet eyes were fine and expressive. Her face was slender, with dimples near the corners of her mouth: a sensitive face, still fresh and girlish. Her fairness was that of her type—a type markedly Irish. The wet handkerchief that had brought away a faint blotch of scarlet from her rather full lips had left them still red with the sufficient color of youthful health. Ly-

ing relaxed for half an hour, watching the lazily drifting white clouds, she became tranquilized. Her eyes lost their restlessness as she gazed dreamily at the heavens.

The soft splash of oars caused her to lift her head guardedly and glance out upon the river. A young man was deftly urging a cedar skiff toward a huge elm that had been uprooted by a spring storm and lay with half its trunk submerged. He jumped out and tied the skiff to a convenient limb and then, standing on the trunk, adjusted a rod and line and began amusing himself by dropping a brilliant fly here and there on the surface. It was inconceivable that anyone could imagine that fish were to be wooed and won in this part of the stream; Nan knew better than that herself. But failures apparently did not diminish the pleasure the fisherman found in his occupation.

He was small and compactly made and wore white flannel trousers, canvas shoes, and a pink shirt with a four-in-hand to match. He moved about freely on the log to give variety to his experiments; he was indeed much nimbler with his feet than with his hands, for his whipping of the stream lacked the sophistication of skilled fly-casting. He lighted a cigarette without abating his efforts, and commented audibly upon his stupidity when a too-vigorous twist of the wrist sent the fly into a sapling, in which it seemed for a moment it meant to remain to the end of time.

He was not of her world, Nan reflected, peering at him through the fringing willows. She knew most of the young gentlemen who attended dances or played tennis or golf at the Country Club, and he was not of their species. Once in making a long cast his foot slipped, and he capered wildly while regaining his balance, fell astraddle of the log, and one shoe shipped water. He glanced about to make sure this misfortune had not been observed, shook the water out of his shoe and lighted a fresh cigarette.

She admired the dexterity with which he held the rod under his arm, manipulated the "makings" and had the little cylinder burning in a jiffy and hanging

to his lip—a fashion of carrying a cigarette not affected by the young gentlemen she knew. It was just a little rakish; but he was, she surmised, a rather rakish young man. A gray cap tilted over one ear exaggerated his youthful appearance; his countenance was still round and boyish, though she judged him to be older than herself.

The patience and industry with which he plied the rod were admirable; though there was not the slightest probability that a fish would snap at the fly, he continued his futile casting with the utmost zeal and good humor. His sinewy arms were white—which, being interpreted, meant that their exposure to the sun had not been as constant as might be expected of one who was lord of his own time and devoted to athletics. She was wondering whether he intended to continue his exercise indefinitely, when his efforts to extricate the fly from a tangle of water-grass freed it unexpectedly, and the line described a semi-circle and caught a limb of the sycamore under which she was lying.

His vigorous tugs only tightened it the more, and she began speculating as to whether she should rise and loosen it or await his own solution of the difficulty. If it became necessary for him to leave the fallen tree to effect a rescue, he must find her hiding-place; and her dignity, she argued, would suffer if she allowed him to discover that she had been watching him. He now began moving toward the bank with the becoming air of determination that had attended his practice with the rod. She rose quickly, jumped up and caught the bough that held the fly, and tore it loose with a handful of leaves.

"Lordy!" he exclaimed, staring hard. "Did you buy a ticket for this show, or did you stroll in on a rain-check?"

"Oh, I was here first; but it isn't my river!" she replied easily. "They don't seem to be biting very well," she added consolingly.

"Biting? Well I should say not! There hasn't been a minnow in this river since the Indians left. I'm just practicing."

"You've done a lot of it," said Nan, looking around for her hat and picking

it up as though to forecast an immediate departure. He dropped his rod and walked toward her guardedly and with an assumed carelessness, his hands in his pockets.

"That's one good thing about fly-fishing," he observed detainingly; "you don't need to bother about the fish so long as there's plenty of water."

He noted the handkerchief that she had spread on a bush to dry, and eyed her with appreciation as she thrust the pins through her hat.

"Country Club?" he asked casually.

A., late of good old Perry County on La Belle Rivière,—and I've seen you lots of times down town. I'm connected in a minor capacity with the well known house of Copeland-Farley Company, drugs, wholesale only—naturally sort o' take an interest in the family."

IT was still wholly possible for her to walk away without replying; and yet his slangy speech amused her, and his manner was deferential. She remembered the Amidons from her childhood at Belleville, on the Ohio, and she even



Lying relaxed for half an hour, watching the lazily-drifting white clouds, Nan became tranquilized. Her eyes lost their restlessness as she gazed dreamily at the heavens.

She nodded affirmatively, glancing toward the red roof of the club-house, and brushed the bits of bark and earth from her skirt. If he meant to annoy her with further conversation, it might be just as well to make it clear that the club afforded an easily accessible refuge.

"Excuse me, but you are Miss Farley. It's kind o' funny," he continued, still lounging toward her, "but I remember you away back when we were both kids,—my name being Amidon—Jeremiah

vaguely remembered the boy this young man must have been. Within three yards of her he paused, as though to reassure her that he was not disposed to presume upon an acquaintance that rested flimsily upon knowledge that might have awakened unwelcome memories; and seeing that she hesitated, he remarked:

"A good deal has happened since you sat in front of me in the public school down there. I guess a good deal has happened to both of us."

This was too intimate for immediate acceptance; but she would at least show him that whatever changes might have taken place in their affairs, she was not a snob.

"You are Jerry; the other Amidon boy was Obadiah. I remember him because the name always seemed so funny."

"You're playing safe! Obey died when he was ten—poor little kid! Scarlet fever. That was right after the flood you floated away on."

She murmured her regret at the death of his brother. It was, however, still a delicate question just how much weight should be given to these slight ties of their common youth.

The disagreeable connotations of his introduction—the southward-looking vista that led back to the poverty and squalor to which she was born—were rather rosily obscured by the atmosphere of assured blitheness he exhaled. He seemed to imply that they had both put Belleville behind them and that there was nothing surprising in this meeting under happier conditions. He was a clean-cut, well-knit, resolute young fellow. His brownish hair was combed back from his forehead with an onion-skin smoothness; indeed, he imparted a general impression of smoothness. His gray eyes expressed a juvenile innocence; his occasional smile was a slow, reluctant grin that disclosed white, even teeth. A self-confident young fellow; a trifle fresh, and yet with an unobtrusive freshness that was not displeasing.

"I broke away from the home-plate when I was sixteen," he went on, "about four years after you pulled out; and I've been engaged in commercial pursuits in this very town ever since. Arrived in a freight-car," he amplified cheerfully, as though she were entitled to all the facts. "Got a job with the aforesaid well-known jobbing house. Began by sweeping out, and now I swing a sample-case down the lower Wabash. Oh, not vulgarly rich! but I manage to get my laundry out every Saturday night."

"You travel for the house, do you?" she asked.

"That's calling it by a large name; but I can't deny that your words give

me pleasure. They're just trying me out; it's up to me to make good. I've seen you in the office now and then; but you never knew me."

"If I ever saw you, I didn't know you, of course," she said with unaffected sincerity; "if I had, I should have spoken to you."

"Oh, I never worried about that! But of course it would be all right if you didn't want to remember me. I was an ugly little one-gallus kid with a frowsy head and freckled face. I shouldn't expect you to remember me for my youthful beauty; but you saved me from starvation once; I sat on your fence and watched you eat a large red apple, and traded you my only agate—it was an imitation—for the core."

She laughed, declaring that she could never have been so grasping, and he decided that she was a good fellow. Her manner of ignoring the social chasm that yawned between members of the fashionable Country Club and the Little Ripple Club farther down the river, to which young men who invaded the lower Wabash with sample-cases were acceptable, was wholly in her favor. Her parents had been much poorer than his own: his father had been a teamster; hers had been a common day laborer and a poor stick at that. And recurring to the maternal line, her mother had without shame added to the uncertain family income by taking in washings. His mother, on the other hand, had canned her own fruit and been active in the affairs of the First M. E. Church, serving on committees with the wives of men who owned stores and were therefore of Belleville's aristocracy; she had even been invited to the parsonage to supper.

If Nan Corrigan's parents had not perished in an Ohio River flood, and if Timothy Farley, serving on a flood sufferers' relief committee, had not rescued her from a shanty that was about to be toppled over by the angry waters, Nan Farley would not be standing there in expensive raiment talking to him. It was possible that she too was thinking of just these things.

"I've been fortunate, of course," she said, as though condensing an answer to many questions.

"I guess there's a good deal in luck," he replied easily. "If one of our best tie-hoppers hadn't got killed in a trolley smash-up, I might never have got a chance to try the road. I'd probably have been doing Old Masters with the marking pot around the shipping-room to the end of time."

His way of putting things amused her, and her smile heightened his admiration of her dimples.

"I suppose you're going fishing when you learn how to manage the fly?" she asked, willing to prolong the talk now that they had disposed of the past.

"You never spoke truer words! It's this way," he continued confidentially: "When I see a fellow doing something I don't know how to do, my heart-action isn't good till I learn the trick. It used to make me sick to have to watch 'em marking boxes at the store, and I began getting down at six A. M. to practice, so when a chance came along I'd be ready to handle the brush. And camping once over Sunday a few miles down this romantic stretch of sand-bars, I saw a chap hook a bass with a hand-made fly instead of a worm, and I've been waiting until returning prosperity gave me the price of a box of those things to try it myself. And here you've caught me in the act. But don't give me away to the sports up there." He indicated the club-house with a jerk of the head. "It might injure my credit on the street."

"Oh, I'll not give you away!" she replied in his own key. "But did the man you saw catch the fish that time ever enter more fully into your life? I should think he ought to have known how highly you approved of him."

"Well, I got acquainted with him after that, and he's taken quite a shine to me, if I may say it which shouldn't. The name being Eaton—John Cecil, lawyer by trade."

Her face expressed surprise; then she laughed aloud.

"He's never taken a shine to me; I think he disapproves of me. If he doesn't,"—she frowned,— "he ought to!"

"Oh, nothing like that!" he declared with his peculiar slangy intonation. "He isn't half as frosty as he looks; he's the

greatest ever; says he believes he could have made something out of me if he'd caught me sooner. He works at it occasionally, anyway; trying to purify my grammar—a hard job; says my slang is picturesque and useful for commercial purposes, but little adapted to the politer demands of the drawing-room. You know how Cecil talks? He's a grand talker—sort o' guys you, and you can't get mad."

"I've noticed that," said Nan, with a rueful smile. "You ought to be proud that he takes an interest in you. I suppose it's your sense of humor; he's strong for that."

THIS compliment, ventured cautiously, clearly pleased Amidon. He stooped, picked up a pebble and sent it skimming over the water.

"He says a sense of humor is essential to one who gropes for the philosophy of life—his very words. I don't know what it means, but he says if I'm good and quit opening all my remarks with 'Listen,' he'll elucidate some day."

Her curiosity was aroused. The social conjunction of John Cecil Eaton and Jeremiah A. Amidon was bewildering.

"He's not in the habit of wasting time on people he doesn't like—me, for example," she remarked, lifting her handkerchief from the bush and shaking it out. "I suppose you met him in a business way?"

"Not much! Politics! I room in his ward, and we meet in the Fourth Ward Democratic Club. He tried to smash the Machine in the primary last spring, and I helped clean him up—some job, I can tell you! But he's a good loser, and he says it's his duty to win me over to the Cause of Righteousness. Cecil's a thinker, all right. He says thought isn't regarded as highly nowadays as it used to be; says my feet are well trained now, and I ought to begin using my head. He always wears that solemn front, and you never know when to laugh. Just toys with his funny whiskers and never blinks. Says he tries his jokes on me before he springs 'em at the University Club. I just let him string me; in fact, I've got to; he says I need his chasten-

ing hand. Gave me a copy of the Bible, Christmas, and told me to learn the Ten Commandments; said they were going out of fashion pretty fast, and he thought I could build up a reputation for being eccentric by living up to 'em. Says if Moses had made eleven, he couldn't have improved on the job any. Queer way of talking religion, but Cecil's different, 'any way you look at him.'

These revelations as to John Cecil Eaton's admiration for the Ten Commandments, coming from Amidon, were surprising, but not so puzzling as the evident fact that Eaton found Copeland - Farley's young commercial traveler worth cultivating. Amidon was quick to see that he rose in Nan's estimation by reason of Eaton's friendly interest.

"Well, I never get on with him," she confessed, willing to sacrifice herself that Amidon might plume himself the more upon Eaton's partiality.

"Lord, I don't understand him!" Amidon protested. "If I was smart enough to do that, I wouldn't be working for eighteen per. I guess he just gets lonesome sometimes and looks me up to have somebody to talk to—not that *anybody* wouldn't be tickled to hear him, but he says he finds in me a certain raciness and tang of the Hoosier soil—whatever that means. He took me over to the Art Institute last Sunday and



He lighted a cigarette without abating his efforts; and commented audibly upon his stupidity when a too-vigorous twist of the wrist sent the fly into a sapling, in which it seemed for a moment it meant to remain to the end of time.

gave me a lecture on the pictures, and me not understanding any more than if he'd been talking Chinese. Introduced me to a Frenchman fresh from Paris and told him my ideals were distinctly post-impressionistic. Then we bumped into a college professor, and he made me

talk so the guy could note the mellow flavor of my idiom. Can you beat that? Cecil says the hostility of the social classes to each other is preposterous. Got me to take him to a dance the freight-handlers were throwing. It was funny, but they all warmed to him like flies to a leaky sugar-barrel. Wore his evening clothes and white vest — the only guy there in an ironed shirt! I thought they'd sure kill him; but not on your life!"

THE John Cecil Eaton thus limned was not the austere person Nan knew. Her Eaton was a sedate gentleman who made cryptic remarks to her at parties and was known to be exceedingly conservative in social matters. Amidon, she surmised, was far too keen to subject himself unwillingly to Eaton's caustic humor; nor was Eaton a man to trouble himself with anyone unless he received an adequate return.

"I must be going back," she said, glancing at her watch. Her casual manner of consulting the pretty trinket on her wrist charmed him. He was pleased with himself that he had been able to carry through an interview with so superior a person.

He had never been more at ease in his most brilliant conversations with the prettiest stenographer in the drug house, whose sole aim in life seemed to be to "call him down" for his freshness. Lunch-counter girls, shop girls, attractive motion-picture cashiers, were an alluring target for his wit, and the more cruelly they snubbed him the more intensely he admired them. But the stimulus of these adventures was not comparable to the exaltation he experienced from this encounter with Nan Farley. If she had pretended not to remember him, he should have hated her cordially; as it was, he liked her immensely. If she lacked the pert "come-back" of girls behind desks and counters, he felt, nevertheless, that she would give a good account of herself in like positions if exposed to the bold raillery of commercial travelers. He was humble before her kindness. She turned away, hesitated an instant, then took a step toward him and put out her hand.

"It's been nice to see you again," she said, amiably. "Good luck!"

"Good luck to you, Miss Farley," he said. "I hope to meet you again sometime."

"Thank you; I hope so too."

She nodded brightly and moved off along the path toward the club-house. He felt absently for his book of cigarette-paper as he reviewed what she had said and what he had said.

He did not resume his whipping of the river but restored his rod to its case and turned slowly down-stream, not neglecting to lift his eyes to the club-house as he drifted by.

CHAPTER II

THE AFFAIRS OF MRS. COPELAND

IN a quiet corner of the club veranda Fanny Copeland and John Cecil Eaton were engaged in desultory conversation. They had been conscious of the noisy gayety of Mrs. Kinney's party, and they observed Nan Farley's hurried exit and disappearance.

"Nan doesn't seem to be responding to encores," remarked Eaton. "She's gone off to sulk — bored, probably; prefers to be alone, poor kid! It's outrageous the way that bunch works her."

"They have to be amused," replied Mrs. Copeland, "and I've heard that Nan can be very funny."

"There are all kinds of fun," Eaton assented drily. "She's been taking off Uncle Tim again. I don't see that he's getting anything for his money — that is, assuming that she gets his money."

"If she doesn't," said Mrs. Copeland, quickly, "she won't be the only person that's disappointed."

Eaton lifted his eyes toward a stretch of woodland beyond the river and regarded it fixedly. Then his gaze reverted to her.

"You think Billy wants to get back the money he paid Farley for the drug business?" he asked, in a colorless, indifferent tone that was habitual.

John Cecil Eaton was nearing the end of his thirties — tall, lean, with a closely trimmed black beard. He was dressed



"How funny you are! I wish I weren't afraid of you!" she exclaimed. "I've made a careful study of the phobias," he returned, "and there is nothing in the best authorities to justify a fear of me."

for the links, and his waiting caddy was guarding his bag in the distance and incidentally experimenting at clock golf. Eaton's long fingers were knit upon the back of his head in such manner as to set his cap awry. One was conscious of the deliberate gaze of his eyes; his drawling voice and dry humor suggested a man of leisurely habits. He specialized in patent law—that is to say, having a small but certain income, he was able to discriminate in his choice of cases, and he accepted only those that particularly interested him. He had never married but was still carried hopefully on the list of eligibles. By general consent he was the best dinner man in town—a guest who could be relied upon to keep the talk going and make a favorable impression on pilgrims from abroad.

Eaton's interests were not confined to his profession. He read prodigiously in many fields, and made long journeys every summer. His occasional efforts to improve the tone of local politics greatly amused his friends, who could not see why a man who might have been pardoned for looking enviously upon a seat in the United States Senate should subject himself to the indignity of a defeat for the city council. To the men he lunched with daily at the University Club his interest in municipal affairs was only another of his eccentricities.

Mrs. Copeland's ironic smile at his last remark had lingered. Their eyes met glancingly; the gaze of both fell upon the distant treetops. Theirs was an old friendship, that rendered unnecessary the filling in of gaps. Eaton was thinking less concretely of her reference to Billy Copeland's designs upon the Farley money, than of the abstract fact that a divorced woman might sit upon a club veranda and hear her former spouse's voice raised in joyous exclamation within, and even revert without any great emotion to the possibility of his re-marrying.

Times and standards had changed. The roster of the Country Club bore testimony of the passing of the old order. The membership committee no longer concerned itself with the previous condition of servitude of applicants. You

might speak of late arrivals like the Kinneys with all the scorn you pleased, but they had been recognized by everybody but a few ultra-conservatives whose criticisms did not weigh heavily as against the handsome villa in which these same Kinneys had established themselves in the new residential area on the river bluff. Curiosity is a stern foe of snobbishness; and when Mrs. Kinney seemed so "sweet" and had given a thousand dollars to the new Girls' Club, besides endowing a children's room in the Presbyterian Hospital, many very proper and dignified matrons felt fully justified in crossing the Rubicon (otherwise White River) for an inspection of Mrs. Bob Kinney's new house. Eaton had accepted such things in a philosophic spirit, just as he accepted Kinney's retainer to safeguard the patents on the devices that made Kinney's cement the best on the market and the only brand that would take the finish and tint of tile or marble.

"IT seems to be understood that they're waiting for Farley to die so they can be married comfortably. But Farley's a tough old hickory knot. He's capable of hanging on just to spite them."

"He was always very kind to me. I saw a good deal of him and his wife after I came here. He was proud of the business and anxious that Billy should carry it on and keep developing it."

"I always liked the steamboating period of Farley's life," said Eaton, ignoring this frank reference to her former husband, in which he thought he detected a trace of wistfulness; "and he's told me a good deal about it at times. It was much more picturesque than his wholesale-drugging. He never quite got over his river days—he's always been the second mate, bullying the roustabouts."

"He never forgot how to swear," Mrs. Copeland laughed. "He does it adorably."

"There was never anything like him when he's well heated," Eaton continued. "He never means anything—it's just his natural way of talking. His customers rather liked it on the whole—

expected him to commit them to the fiery pit every time they came to town and dropped in to see him. When he got stung in a trade,—which wasn't often,—he'd go into his room and lock the door and curse himself for an hour or two and then go out and raise somebody's wages. A character—a real person, old Uncle Tim."

The thought of the retired merchant seemed to give Eaton pleasure; a smile played furtively about his lips.

"Then it must have been his wife who used to lure him to church every Sunday morning."

"Not a bit of it! It was the old boy himself. He had a superstitious feeling that business would go badly if he cut church. He never swore on Sundays, but made up for it Monday mornings. He's always been a generous backer of foreign missionaries on the theory that by christianizing the heathen we're widening the markets for American commerce. We've had worse men than Farley. I suppose he never told a lie or did an underhanded thing through all the years he was in business. And all he has to leave behind him is his half million or so—and Nan."

"And Nan," Mrs. Copeland repeated with a shrug of her shoulders. "I suppose Mr. Farley knows what's up. He's too shrewd not to know. Clever as Nan is, she could hardly pull the wool over his eyes."

"She's much too clever not to know she can't fool him; but he's immensely fond of her, just as his wife was. And we've got to admit that Nan is a very charming person—a little devilish, but keen and amusing. She's too good for that crowd she's running with—no doubt of that."

Mrs. Copeland's former husband was a conspicuous member of the crowd Nan was "running with"—a fact which precluded the further pursuit of the subject.

"IF Uncle Tim thought she meant to marry Billy, he would take pains to see that she didn't," Eaton remarked.

"You mean he wouldn't leave her the money?" she asked in a lower tone. "I suppose he'd have to."

Eaton shook his head.

"He's under no obligations to give it all to Nan. If he thought there was any chance of her marrying Billy—!"

"She's been led to believe that it would all be hers. The Farleys educated her and brought her up in a way to encourage the belief. It would be cruel to disappoint her; he wouldn't have any right to cut her off," Mrs. Copeland concluded with feeling.

"It might be less cruel to cut her off than to let her have it all and go on the way she's started. She came about ten years too late upon the scene. It's only within a few years that a party like we've listened to in there would have been possible in this town. If Nan had reached her twentieth year a decade ago, she'd have been the demurest of little girls, and there would have been no question of her marrying a man who had divorced his wife merely to be free to appropriate her."

Mrs. Copeland opened and closed her eyes quickly several times. No other man of her acquaintance would have dared to speak of her personal affairs in this blunt fashion. Eaton had referred to the divorce that had severed her ties with Copeland quite as though she were not an interested party to that transaction. He now went a step further, and the color deepened in her face as he said:

"I don't understand why you didn't resist his suit. I've never said this to you before, and it's too late to be proffering advice, but you oughtn't to have let it go as you did. Billy's whole conduct was perfectly contemptible."

"There was no sense in making a fight if he wanted to quit. The law couldn't widen the breach; it was there anyhow, from the first moment I knew what was in his mind."

"He acted like a scoundrel," persisted Eaton in his cool, even tones; "it was base, rotten, damnable!"

"If you mean,"—she hesitated and frowned,—"if you mean that he let the impression get abroad that I was at fault—that it was I who had become interested elsewhere—it's only just to say that I never thought Billy did that. I don't believe now that he did it."



"So the Pembrokes are comin' to it, are they?" he said. "They've got to have something that looks like liquor—well, answered: "Oh, I had one glass; nobody had more, I think; there



they'll be passin' the cocktails before long. "Claret cup dressed up like juleps; and how much did you get of it?" She was some kind of mineral water besides. It was all very simple."

Their eyes met in a long gaze, though on his part it was less the intentness of inquiry than a deep preoccupation with his own thoughts. He was aware that he had ventured far toward the red lamps of danger. This matter of her personal honor was too delicate for veranda discussion; in fact, it was not a matter that he had any right to refer to even remotely at any time or place.

"Of course, unpleasant things were said," she added. "I suppose they're always bound to be. Manning was his friend, not mine."

He received this impassively, which was his way of receiving well nigh everything.

"By keeping out of the way, that gentleman proved that he couldn't have been any friend of yours. If he'd been a gentleman or even a man—"

She broke in upon him quietly, bending toward him with tense eagerness.

"He offered to: I have never told that to anyone, but I don't want you to be unfair even to him. My mistake was that I meekly followed Billy when he began running with the new crowd. I knew I was boring him, and I thought if I took up with the Kinneys and the people they were training with, he might get tired of them after a while and we could go on as we had begun. But I hadn't reckoned with Nan. I allowed myself to be put in competition with a girl of twenty—which is a foolish thing for a woman of thirty-five to do."

SHE carried lightly the thirty-five years to which she confessed, but sometimes in unguarded moments a startled, pained look stole into her brown eyes, as though at the remembrance of a blow that might repeat itself. There was a patch of white in her hair just at one side of her forehead. Its effect was to contribute to her natural air of distinction. She wore to-day a blue skirt and a plain blouse, with a soft collar opened at the throat.

After her divorce—at which she took nothing from Copeland, though money had been offered—she had established herself as a dairy farmer on twenty acres of land that she had inherited from her

father, a banker in one of the smaller county-seats, who had been specially interested in dairying and had encouraged her interest in the diversions he made profitable.

She had taken a course in dairying at the State Agricultural School and knew the business in all its practical aspects. Copeland had first seen her at a winter resort in Florida where she had gone with her father in his last illness, and their common ties with Indiana had made it easily possible for him to cultivate her better acquaintance later at home.

Billy Copeland was an attractive young fellow with good prospects; his social experience was much ampler than hers, and the marriage seemed to her friends an advantageous one.

When after twelve years she found herself free, she rose from the ruins of her domestic happiness determined to live her life in the way that pleased her best. Two years had passed, and her broken wings again beat the air with something of their early rhythm.

The second year of her dairying had turned a balance on the right side of her ledger. If she had been poor, a divorcée lodged in a boarding-house and in need of practical aid, she might have suffered from neglect; but having an assured small income which her investment in the dairy farm in nowise jeopardized, it was rather the thing to look in on her occasionally. And there were women who sought her out merely to emphasize their disapproval of Copeland and the scandal of his divorce, which they felt to be an affront to the community's dignity in a man whose father had been of the old order of decent, law-abiding, home-keeping, church-going citizens. They admired the courage and dignity with which she met misfortune and addressed herself uncomplainingly to the business of fashioning a new life.

"I've been keeping you from your game," she said, rising abruptly; "and I must be getting home."

They walked down the veranda toward the entrance and reached the door at a moment when Copeland, who had been keeping company with a tall glass

The Hidden Path

A new "Uncle Abner" story, which means a treat for all who delight in Mr. Post's perfectly written mystery stories.

By Melville
Davisson Post

ILLUSTRATED BY
WILLIAM OBERHARDT

IT WAS night, and the first snow of October was in the air when my uncle got down from his horse before the door. The great stone house sat on a bench of the mountain. Behind it lay the forest, and below, the pasture land of the Hills.

After the disastrous failure of Prince Charles Edward Stuart to set up his kingdom in Scotland, more than one great Highland family had fled oversea into Virginia, and for a hundred years had maintained its customs. It was at the house of such a family that my uncle stopped.

There was the evidence of travel hard and long on my uncle and his horse. An old man bade him enter.

"Who is here?" said my uncle.

"Only the Iolaiy Dearg," replied the servant, which was to say "The Red Eagle" in the Gaelic tongue.

And he led my uncle through the hall into the dining-room. It was a scene laid back a hundred years in Skye that he came on. A big woman of middle age dined alone, in a long, beamed room, lighted with tallow candles. An ancient servant stood behind her chair.

Two features of the woman were con-



Uncle Abner

spicuous—her bowed nose and her coarse red hair.

She got up when she saw my uncle.

"Abner," she cried, "by the Blessed God I am glad to see you! Come in! Come in!"

My uncle entered, and she put him beyond her at the table.

"You ought to eat, Abner," she said; "for by all the tokens, you have traveled."

"A long way," replied my uncle.

"And did the ravens of Elijah send you to me?" said the woman. "For I need you."

"What need?" inquired my uncle, while he attacked the rib of beef and the

baked potatoes, for the dinner, although set with some formality, was plain.

"Why, this need, Abner: For a witness whose name will stand against the world."

"A witness!" repeated my uncle.

"Aye, a witness," continued the woman. "The country holds me hard and dour, and given to impose my will. There will be a wedding in my house to-night, and I would have you see it, free of pressure. My niece, Margaret McDonald, has got her senses finally."

My uncle looked down at the cloth.

"Who is the man?" he said.

"Campbell," she answered, "and good man enough for a stupid woman."

FOR a moment my uncle did not move.

His hands, his body, the very muscles in his eyelids, were for that moment inert as plaster. Then he went on with the potato and the rib of beef.

"Campbell is here, then?" he said.

"He came to-night," replied the woman, "and for once the creature has some spirit. He will have the girl to-night or never. He and my husband, Allen Elliott, have driven their cattle out of the glades and on the way to Baltimore. Allen is with the cattle on the Cumberland road, and Campbell rode hard in here to take the girl or to leave her. And whether she goes or stays, he will not return. When the cattle are sold in Baltimore, he will take a ship out of the Chesapeake for Glasgow."

She paused and made a derisive gesture.

"The devil, Abner, or some witch trick, has made a man of Campbell. He used to be irresolute and sullen, but to-night he has the spirit of the men who lifted cattle in the lowlands. He is a Campbell of Glen Lion on this night. Believe me, Abner, the wavering beastie is now as hard as oak, and has the devil's courage. Wherefore is it that a man can change like that?"

"A man may hesitate between two masters," replied my uncle, "and be only weak, but when he finally makes his choice he will get what his master has to give him—the courage of heaven, if he go that way, or of hell, Madam, if he go that way."

"Man! Man!" she laughed. "If 'the one who is not to be named,' as we say, put his spirit into Campbell, he did a grand work. It is the wild old cattle-lifter of Glen Lion that he is the night!"

"Do you think," said my uncle, "that a McDonald of Glencoe ought to be mated with a Campbell of Glen Lion?"

The woman's face hardened.

"Did Lord Stair and the Campbells of Glen Lion massacre the McDonalds of Glencoe on yesterday at sunrise, or two hundred years back? Margaret—the fool!—said that before she got my final word."

"Is it not in an adage," said my uncle, "that the Highlander does not change?"

"But the world changes, Abner," replied the woman. "Campbell is no 'Bonnie Charlie,' he is at middle age, a dour man and silent, but he will have a sum of money from a half of the cattle, and he can take care of this girl."

Then she cried out in a sharper voice:

"And what is here in this mountain for her, will you tell me? We grow poor! The old men are to feed. Allen owes money that his half of the cattle will hardly pay. Even old MacPherson"—and she indicated the ancient man behind her chair—"has tried to tell her, in his wise-wife folderol, 'I see you in the direst peril that overtakes a lassie, and a big shouldered man to save you.' And it was no omen, Abner, but the vision of his common sense. Here are the lean years to dry out the fool's youth, and surely Campbell is big shouldered enough for any prophecy. And now, Abner, will you stay and be a witness?"

"I will be one witness," replied my uncle slowly, "if you will send for my brother Rufus to be another."

The woman looked at her guest in wonder.

"That would be twenty miles through the Hills," she said. "We could not get Rufus by the morn's morn."

"No," said Abner, "it would be three miles to Maxwell's Tavern. Rufus is there to-night."

THE big-nosed, red haired woman drummed on the cloth with the tips of her fingers, and one knew what she was thinking. Her relentless will was

the common talk. What she wished she forced with no concern.

But the girl was afraid of Campbell. The man seemed evil to her. It was not evidenced in any act. It was instinct in the girl. She felt the nature of the man like some venomous thing pretending to be gentle until its hour. And this fear, dominant and compelling, gave her courage to resist the woman's will.

The long suit of Campbell for the girl was known to everybody, and the woman's favor of it and the girl's resistance. The woman foresaw what folk in the Hills would say, and she wished to forestall that gossip by the presence in her house of men whose word could not be gainsaid. If Abner and his brother Rufus were here, no report of pressure on the girl could gain belief.

She knew what reports her dominating personality set current. She, and not her husband, was the head of their affairs, and with an iron determination she held to every

"That will be to wait," she said, "and Campbell is in haste, and the bride is being made ready by the women, and the minister is got... To Maxwell's Tavern!"

Then she arose.

"Well, I will make a bargain with you. I will send for Rufus, but you must gain Campbell over to the waiting. And you must gain him, Abner, by your own de-



A big woman of middle age dined alone. An ancient servant stood behind her chair.

Highland custom, every form, every feudal detail that she could, against the detritus of democratic times and ridicule, and the gain upon her house of poverty, and lean years. She was alone at that heavy labor. Allen Eliott was a person without force. He was usually on his cattle range in the mountains, with his big partner Campbell, or in the great drive, as now, to Baltimore. And she had the world to face.

vices, for I will not tell him that I have sent out for a witness to the freedom of my niece in this affair. If you can make him wait, the thing shall wait until Rufus is come. But I will turn no hand to help."

"Is Campbell in the house?" said my uncle.

"Yes," she said, "and ready when the minister is come."

"Is he alone?" said Abner.

"Alone," she said, with a satirical smile, "as a bridegroom ought to be for his last reflections."

"Then," replied my uncle, "I will strike the bargain."

SHE laughed in a heavy chuckle, like a man.

"Hold him if you can. It will be a pretty undertaking, Abner, and practice for your wits. But by stealth it shall be. I will not have you bind the bridegroom like the strong man in the Scriptures." And the chuckle deepened. "And that, too, I think, might be no easier than the finesse you set at. He is a great man in the body, like yourself."

She stood up to go out, but before she went, she said another word.

"Abner," she said, "you will not blame me," and her voice was calm. "Somebody must think a little for these pretty fools. They are like the lilies of the field in their lack of wisdom; they will always bloom, and there is no winter! Why, man, they have no more brain than a haggis! And what are their little loves against the realities of life? And their tears, Abner, are like the rains in summer, showering from every cloud. And their heads crammed with folderol—a prince will come, and they cannot take a good man for that dream!" She paused and added:

"I will go and send for Rufus. And when you have finished with your dinner, MacPherson will take you in to Campbell."

THE woman was hardly gone before the old man slipped over to Abner's chair.

"Mon," he whispered, "ha'e ye a wee drop?"

"No liquor, MacPherson," said my uncle.

The old man's bleared eyes blinked like a half blinded owl's.

"It would be gran', a wee drop, the night," he said.

"For joy at the wedding," said my uncle.

"Na, mon, na, mon!" Then he looked swiftly around.

"The eagle ha beak and talons, and what ha the dove, mon?"

"What do you mean, MacPherson?" said my uncle.

The old creature peered across the table.

"Ye ha gran' shoulders, mon," he said.

My uncle put down his fork.

"MacPherson," he said, "what do you beat about?"

"I wa borned," he replied, "wi a cowl, and I can see!"

"And what do you see?" inquired Abner.

"A vulture flying," said the old man, "but it is unco dark beneath him."

Again on this night every motion and every sign of motion disappeared from my uncle's body and his face. He remained for a moment like a figure cut in wood.

"A vulture!" he echoed.

"Aye, mon! What ha the dove to save it?"

"The vulture, it may be," said my uncle.

"The Red Eagle, and the foul vulture!" cried the old man. "Noo, mon, it is the bird of death!"

"A bird of death, but not a bird of prey." Then he got up.

"You may have a familiar spirit, MacPherson," he said coldly, "for all I know. Perhaps they live on after the Witch of Endor. It is a world of mystery. But I should not come to you to get up Samuel, and I see now why the Lord stamped out your practice. It was because you misled his people. If there is a vulture in this business, MacPherson, it is no symbol of your bridegroom. And now, will you take me in to Campbell?"

The old man flung the door open, and Abner went out into the hall. As he crossed the sill, a girl, listening at the door, fled past him. She had been crouched down against it.

She was half dressed, all in white, as though escaped for a moment out of the hands of tiring women. But she had the chalk face of a ghost, and eyes wide with fear.

My uncle went on as though he had passed nothing, and the old Scotchman before him only wagged his head, with the whispered comment, "It wa be gran', a wee drop, the night."

"The Red Eagle, and the foul
vulture!" cried the old man.
"Noo, mon, it is the bird
of death!"



THEY came into a big room of the house with candles on a table, and a fire of chestnut logs. A man walking about stopped on the hearth. He was a huge figure of a man in middle life.

A fierce light leaped up in his face when he saw my uncle.

"Abner!" he said. "Why does the devil bring you here?"

"It would be strange, Campbell," replied my uncle, "if the devil were against you. The devil has been much maligned. He is very nearly equal, the Scriptures tell us, to the King of Kings. He is no fool to mislead his people and to trap his servants. I find him always zealous

in their interests, Campbell, fertile in devices, and holding hard with every trick to save them. I do not admire the devil, Mr.

Campbell, but

I do not find his vice to be a lack of interest in his own."

"Then," cried Campbell, "it is clear that I am not one of his own. For if the devil were on my side, Abner, he would have turned you away from this door to-night."

"Why, no," replied my uncle, with

a reflective air, "that does not follow. I do not grant the devil a supreme control. There is One above him, and if he cannot always manage as his people wish, they should not for that reason condemn him with a treasonable intent."

The man turned with a decisive gesture.

"Abner," he said, "let me understand this thing. Do you come here upon some idle gossip, to interfere with me in this marriage? Or by chance?"

"Neither the one nor the other," replied my uncle. "I went into the mountains to buy the cattle you and Elliott range there. I found you gone already, with the herd, toward Maryland. And so, as I returned, I rode in here to Elliott's house to rest and to feed my horse."

"Eliott is with the drove," said Campbell.

"No," replied my uncle, "Eliott is not with the drove. I overtook it on the Cheat River. The drivers said you hired them this morning, and rode away."

The man shifted his feet and looked down at my uncle.

"It is late in the season," he said. "One must go ahead to arrange for a field and for some shocks of fodder. Eliott is ahead."

"He is not on the road ahead," returned Abner. "Arnold and his drovers came that way from Maryland, and they had not seen him."

"He did not go the road," said Campbell; "he took a path through the mountains."

MY uncle remained silent for some moments.

"Campbell," said my uncle, "the Scriptures tell us that there is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen. Did Eliott take that path?"

The man changed his posture.

"Now, Abner," he said, "I cannot answer a fool thing like that."

"Well, Campbell," replied my uncle, "I can answer it for you: Eliott did not take that path."

The man took out a big silver watch and opened the case with his thumb-nail.

"The woman ought to be ready," he said.

My uncle looked up at him.

"Campbell," he said, "put off this marriage."

The man turned about.

"Why should I put it off?" he said.

"Well, for one reason, Campbell," replied my uncle, "the omens are not propitious."

"I do not believe in signs," said the man.

"The Scriptures are full of signs," returned Abner. "There was the sign of Joshua and the sign to Ahaz, and there is the sign to you."

The man turned with an oath.

"What accursed thing do you hint about, Abner?"

"Campbell," replied my uncle, "I accept the word; *accursed* is the word."

"Say the thing out plain! What omen? What sign?"

"Why, this sign," replied Abner: "MacPherson, who was born with a cowl, has seen a vulture flying."

"Dammé, man!" cried Campbell. "Do you hang on such a piece of foolery. MacPherson sees his visions in a tin cup—raw corn liquor would set flying the beasts of Patmos. Do you tell me, Abner, that you believe in what MacPherson sees?"

"I believe in what I see myself," replied my uncle.

"And what have you seen?" said the man.

"I have seen the vulture!" replied my uncle. "And I was born clean and have no taste for liquor."

"Abner," said Campbell, "you move about in the dark, and I have no time to grope after you. The woman should be ready."

"But are you ready?" said my uncle.

"Man! Man!" cried Campbell. "Will you be forever in a fog? Well, travel on to Satan if I! I am ready, and here are the women!"

But it was not the bride. It was MacPherson to inquire if the bride should come.

My uncle got up then.

"Campbell," he said, in his deep, level voice, "if the bride is ready, you are not."

The man was at the limit of forbearance.

"The devil take you!" he cried. "If you mean anything, say what it is!"

"Campbell," replied my uncle, "it is the custom to inquire if any man knows a reason why a marriage should not go on. Shall I stand up before the company and give the reason, while the marriage waits? Or shall I give it to you here while the marriage waits?"

The man divined something behind my uncle's menace.

"Bid them wait," he said to MacPherson.

Then he closed the door and turned back on my uncle—his shoulders thrown forward, his fingers clenched, his words prefaced by an oath.

"Now, sir,"—and the oath returned,—
"what is it?"

My uncle got up, took something from his pocket, and put it down on the table. It was a piece of lint, twisted together, as though one had rolled it firmly between the palms of one's hands.

"Campbell," he said, "as I rode the trail on your cattle range, in the mountains, this morning, a bit of white thing caught my eye. I got down and picked up this fragment of lint on the hard ground. It puzzled me. How came it thus rolled? I began to search the ground, riding slowly in an ever widening circle. Presently I found a second bit, and then a third, rolled hard together like the first. Then I observed a significant thing: these bits were in line and leading from your trail down the slope of the cattle range to the border of the forest. I went back to the trail, and there on the baked earth, in line with these bits of lint, I found a spot where a bucket of water had been poured out."

Campbell was standing beyond him, staring at the bit of lint. He looked up without disturbing the crouch of his shoulders.

"Go on," he said.

"It occurred to me," continued my uncle, "that perhaps these bits of lint might be found above the trail, as I had found them below it, and so I rode straight on up the hill to a rail fence. I found no fragment of twisted stuff, but I found another thing, Campbell: I found the weeds trampled on the

other side of the fence. I got down and looked closely. On the upper surface of a flat rail, immediately before the trampled weeds, there was an impression as though a square bar of iron had been laid across it."

My uncle stopped. And again Campbell said:

"Go on."

Abner remained a moment, his eyes on the man; then he continued:

"The impression was in a direct line toward the point on the trail where the water had been poured out. I was puzzled. I got into the saddle and rode back across the trail and down the line of the fragments of lint. At the edge of the forest I found where a log-heap had been burned. I got down again and walked back along the line of the twisted lint. I looked closely, and I saw that the fragments of dried grass, and now and then a rag-weed, had been pressed down, as though by something moving down the hillside from the trail to the burned log-heap.

"Now, Campbell," he said, "what happened on that hillside?"

Campbell stood up and looked my uncle in the face. "What do you think happened?" he said.

"I think," replied Abner, "that some one sat in the weeds behind the fence with a half-stocked, square-barreled rifle laid on the flat rail, and from that ambush shot something passing on the trail, and then dragged it down the hillside to the log-heap. I think that poured-out water was to wash away the blood where the thing fell. I do not know where the bits of lint came from, but I think they were rolled there under the weight of the heavy body. Do I think correctly, eh, Campbell?"

"You do," said the man.

My uncle was astonished, for Campbell faced him, his aspect grim, determined, like one who at any hazard will have the whole of a menace out. "Abner," he said, "you have trailed this thing with some theory behind it. In plain words, what is that theory?"

My uncle was amazed.

"Campbell," he replied, "since you wish the thing said plain, I will not obscure it. Two men own a great herd

of cattle between them. The herd is to be driven over the mountains to Baltimore and sold. If one of the partners is shot out of his saddle and the crime concealed, may not the other partner sell the entire drove for his own and put the whole sum in his pocket?

"And if this surviving partner, Campbell, were a man taken with the devil's resolution, I think he might try to make one great stroke of



Iron shoes rang on the stones before the door. Then, suddenly, as though he waited for the sound, my uncle do you object, who have

this business. I think he might hire men to drive his cattle, giving out that his partner had gone on ahead, and then turn back for the woman he wanted, take her to Baltimore, put her on the ship, sell the cattle, and with the woman and money sail out of the

Chesapeake for the Scotch Highlands he came from! Who could say what became of the missing partner, or that he did not receive his half of the money and meet robbery and murder on his way home?"

My uncle stopped.
And Campbell
broke out into
a great
ironical
laugh.



cried out with a great voice against the marriage. The big-nosed, red-haired woman turned on him: "Why no concern in this thing?"

"Now, let this thing be a lesson to you, Abner. Your little deductions are correct, but your great conclusion is folly.

"We had a wild heifer that would not drive, so we butchered the beast. I had great trouble to shoot her, but I finally managed it from behind the fence."

"But the bits of lint," said my uncle, "and the washed spot?"

"Abner," cried the man, "do you handle cattle for a lifetime and do not know how blood disturbs them? We did not want them in commotion, so we drenched the place where the heifer fell. And your bits of lint! I will discover the mystery there. To keep the blood off we put an old quilt under the yearling and dragged her down the hill on that. The bits of lint were from the quilt, and rolled thus under the weight of the heifer."

Then he added: "That was weeks ago, but there has been no rain for a month, and these signs of crime, Abner, were providentially preserved against your coming!"

"And the log-heap," said my uncle, like one who would have the whole of an explanation, "why was it burned?"

"Now, Abner," continued the man, "after your keen deductions, would you ask me a thing like that? To get rid of the offal from the butchered beast. We would not wash out the blood-stains and leave that to set our cattle mad."

His laugh changed to a note of victory.

"And now, Abner," he cried, "will you stay and see me married, who have come hoping to see me hanged?"

My uncle had moved over to the window. While Campbell spoke, he seemed to listen, not so much to the man as to sounds outside. Now far off on a covered wooden bridge of the road there was the faint sound of horses. And with a grim smile Abner turned about.

"I will stay," he said, "and see which it is."

IT was the very strangest wedding—the big, determined woman like a Fate, the tattered servants with candles in their hands, the minister, and the bride covered and hidden in her veil, like a wooden figure counterfeiting life.

The thing began. There was an atmosphere of silence. My uncle went

over to the window. The snow on the road deadened the sounds of the advancing horses, until the iron shoes rang on the stones before the door. Then, suddenly, as though he waited for the sound, he cried out with a great voice against the marriage. The big-nosed, red-haired woman turned on him:

"Why do you object, who have no concern in this thing?"

"I object," said Abner, "because Campbell has sent Elliott on the wrong path!"

"The wrong path!" cried the woman.

"Aye," said Abner, "on the wrong path. There is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, Job tells us. But the path Campbell sent Elliott on, the vulture did see."

He advanced with great strides into the room.

"Campbell," he cried, "before I left your accursed pasture, I saw a buzzard descend into the forest beyond your log-heap. I went in, and there, shot through the heart, was the naked body of Allen Elliott. Your log-heap, Campbell, was to burn the quilt and the dead man's clothes. You trusted to the vultures, for the rest, and the vultures, Campbell, overreached you."

My uncle's voice rose and deepened.

"I sent word to my brother Rufus to raise a posse comitatus and bring it to Maxwell's Tavern. Then I rode in here to rest and to feed my horse. I found you, Campbell, on the second line of your hell-planned venture!

"I got Mrs. Elliott to send for Rufus to be a witness with me to your accursed marriage. And I undertook to delay it until he came."

He raised his great arm, the clenched bronze fingers big like the coupling pins of a cart.

"I would have stopped it with my own hand," he said, "but I wanted the men of the Hills to hang you. . . . And they are here."

There was a great sound of tramping feet in the hall outside.

And while the men entered, big, grim, silent, determined men, Abner called out their names:

"Arnold, Randolph, Stuard, Elnathan Queen and my brother Rufus!"

"I don't know a thing about music, but I know what I like," Alonzo told her. He looked deep into her blue eyes as he said it, and his ardent expression left no doubt as to what he liked.



It's Always Some Girl or Another

THE lightly-told story of the young man who found that courtship interferes with business.

By Kennett Harris

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A GRAEF

ONE fine, bright morning, Alonzo Sawyer walked a block and a half out of his way to buy a small package of Herefordshire tobacco from the cigar man in the Labyrinthodon building. He did not want the tobacco particularly. What he wanted was felicitation, and he was willing to expend five cents of his small hoard to get it.

The ebullition of joy in the young man's stalwart breast and its ferment in his remarkable red head needed a present outlet to a sympathetic ear.

A business man, Sawyer was. There had been a time, not so long before, when he had been a college man. At college he had distinguished himself, not so much academically as scientifically, and his scientific activities had been

in directions as obnoxious to the faculty and the paternal Sawyer as they had been delightful to his freshman associates. Hence the business career, strictly self-conducted and remarkably checkered—with the accent, as Alonzo admitted, on the wrong kind of check.

The bald-headed cigar man was a cynic and had successfully cultivated a gloomy imperturbability of manner; but there were few who could resist Alonzo's grin. So the cynic permitted a slight relaxation of his visage as the young man kissed a nickel with the utmost tenderness of farewell and laid it on the showcase.

"I'll say one thing for you, Mr. A. Sawyer, Esquire," said the cigar man. "You're a sporty young pup."

He examined the coin seriously.

"I guess you know that there's places where you can get coffee and rolls for five cents," he continued, as he passed over the tobacco.

"I know even worse than that, Neddy," said Sawyer. "If you believe I'm reckless, you do me an injustice. I'm not. I can afford this perfectly. What did I tell you about the sun the last time I was in here?"

The cigar man affected to consider, and then said that he would bite.

"Mind you, I don't claim to be a meteorological expert, but I am some observer and considerable prognosticator on general principles," Alonzo boasted. "I told you that the sun was sure to shine some day; I added that it was darkest just before dawn, and that it was a long lane that had no turning. Well, listen! I'm simply basking in solar warmth at this moment; Aurora's rosy fingers have raised the blinds of day, and I've got to the turn of the lane where there's a sign pointing to Easy Street. Do you get me?"

"You've conned some mutt into giving you a job," guessed the cigar man.

"I'm offered a highly responsible and lucrative position," Sawyer corrected, "entirely unsolicited. The anxiety is all on the other side."

"This man made five hundred and thirty-eight dollars in his spare time the first week. Why not you?" the cynic murmured.

"Not by no manner of means," said Alonzo. "I'm to be second in charge of a branch of one of the most powerful and pernicious corporations in this country—the Eden Express Company, at Rankin City. We handle without gloves large consignments of currency, specie and bullion. Our travelers' checks are honored and revered by leading hotels in Europe. 'The old reliable.' Neddy, the next time I see you, I'll be so rich it will make you bilious to shake hands with me. Is the sun shining? Interrogate me on that point!"

"I'm sorry if this is true," said the cigar man, with deep feeling. "I was hoping you'd go into some honest business. But then we can't all sell cigars. It's my guess, though, that you don't hold that job for more than a reasonable length of time."

"Why not?" asked Alonzo.

His sympathetic friend ticked the reasons off on his fingers:

"Freshness—

"Scrappiness—

"Some Jane or another."

"Perhaps I'd better not accept, then," sighed Alonzo, looking deeply dejected. "I suppose I wouldn't do, after all. Too bad! I was beginning to have some hopes of myself, and fifteen a week is seven hundred and eighty dollars a year, which is seven and a quarter per cent on a very much larger sum. I was intending to take the 4:15 train down to Rankin City this afternoon. Quite sure you're right about me? Couldn't have made any mistake, Neddy?"

The cigar man selected a slim box of cigars from the shelf behind him and began to wrap it up neatly.

"Honest, have you got a job with the Eden? Can the foolish chatter. Is it straight?"

"I'm on my way to it—or was when you discouraged me," Sawyer answered him. "Four-fifteen for Golconda, Indiana, and all way-stations. Yes, I'm off, Neddy. So long!"

"So long," returned Neddy, the bald. "Good luck to you." He held out the package. "Here! Put that in your grip, Sorrel Top. Keep your hands in your pockets and forget the skirts."

As he left the Labyrinthodon, Alonzo

looked at his watch—not casually, but with a sad and lingering fondness.

"Can't be helped, though," he said to himself, and having so decided, he slipped the watch back into his pocket and, squaring his broad shoulders, walked briskly down the street. There followed a brief and breezy business interview with a gentleman who took possession of the watch.

Alonzo paid his landlady two weeks' arrears of board and was surprised at the regret that she seemed to feel. She even hesitated to take the bills that he gave her, hinting that there was no hurry.

Upstairs he said with great emphasis: "Well—what—do—you—know—about—that! The good old scout! And I've wobbled at the knees every time I've seen her for days."

There was not much packing to do. His once magnificent wardrobe had dwindled to proportions that were easily held by his suit-case, excepting a superfluity of linen, which he bundled into his otherwise empty trunk. Shirts are not easily negotiable. One feels a certain delicacy, too, about them.

At 4:15 the suit-case was in a rack of the smoking car of the Golconda and Indiana Limited, and its owner was comfortably disposed on two seats with his pipe between his teeth. At 4:45 he raised himself and looked back from the car window at the rapidly dwindling metropolis of the West.

"Knocked me out in the first; didn't you?" he murmured, apostrophizing the smoke pall. "*Ve-ry* well! I suppose I've got to go and get a reputation now. *Ve-ry* well! It's quite all right. Can Sawyer come back? Just watch him!"

In a little while, he pulled the letter from his breast pocket and read it for the seventh time:

Friend Lonnie:

Your bitter cry to hand some six weeks ago, since when I have been in a state of stupefaction induced by shock. Do you mean to tell me seriously that Chicago has failed to recognize its opportunity, and that you are open for an engagement? Say no more, Rufus, but gird up your loins, pack your sack and hie hither. Rankin City awaits you eagerly and with outstretched arms. The fare is \$2.70 one way, and one way is all you'll need.

Here's the situation: I've been overworked. That isn't anything new; I always have been; but as a matter of fact, we're getting more business than one man can attend to without bringing his lunch-pail to the office. I've made a holler to headquarters for a young man of acute intelligence, unremitting industry, good habits and suave manners to spell me while I go out to my meals. Note particularly "suave manners." I'll tell you more about that when you get here, which will be at 9:02 P. M. Wednesday, being as headquarters has given me carte blanche to hire you. Your bond I can get fixed up here, but that's a mere matter of form, because the Eden pays its men enough to put them beyond temptation. You will pluck down fifteen dollars per, always supposing that I am not assuming too much and that you will jump at the offer. If I don't hear from you, I will expect you Wednesday night.

Lonnie, there's some show here if you make good, and I don't see why you can't if you've only acquired a little sense.

Yours hopefully,
WILLIAM HUNTINGDON BLISS.

SAWYER grinned as he pushed the letter back into its envelope and returned it to his pocket. "Good old Billy Bliss," he said. "Well, I guess Billy's made good. Now it's up to me."

He became thoughtful. "If you've only acquired a little sense." Considering the subject impartially and with perfect candor, Alonzo admitted to himself that in his comparatively short business experience in Chicago, he had not distinguished himself by the quality of discretion that makes for success. As a bill collector, he had allowed some natural feelings of compunction to interfere with his duties and had finally left his employer under an office desk in a badly damaged condition; as a city salesman, he had championed beauty in distress with altogether distressing results; and his last commercial enterprise had been abruptly terminated under circumstances that did more honor to his heart and his manual dexterity than to his head. He considered the cigar man's enumeration.

"Freshness?"

Well, if you wanted to call a friendly, familiar manner and cheerful brilliancy of repartee "freshness," you could. Still, if it was going to stand in his way—

"Scrappiness?"

Not at all. Trouble was the very last thing in the world that he wanted, and meekness under provocation was what he prided himself on. At the same time, there were people blind to reason and justice, deaf to the voice of kindness, halt and lame morally, but by no means dumb when speech was wholly injudicious, who, in fact, called persistently and vociferously for a licking. Nevertheless, such persons should be left alone—side-stepped, in a pacific sense.

"Some Jane or another?"

Again Alonzo felt the cigar man had done him an injustice. He was no skirt specialist. They were all right in their way, and he liked to kid them when they were kiddable kids. Interesting, some of them, and no decent man would stand by and see them getting the worst of it. But beyond that—nothing doing. It might be as well, however, to be a little extra careful.

He was still engaged in self-examination and forming sundry resolutions of a highly praiseworthy nature when the train arrived at Rankin City, and he got off and was almost immediately thumped between his shoulder-blades by a slender, oldish-young man who had a very serious expression that was heightened by thick-lensed spectacles. Sawyer returned the salutation in kind with a heartiness that made the other stagger against a baggage truck. After which, Alonzo jerked him to an upright position and shook hands with him.

"You old skate! Billy, how are you?"

"Let go, you red-headed young ruffian! Lonnie, I'm glad to see you."

They walked from the station, eluding three importunate hackmen, and as they proceeded, Bliss pointed out the metropolitan features of the town with genuine pride. "Street-cars, you see—electric lights. Look at that sign. Reminds a man of Broadway—what? That's the Callaghan Opera House; we get some good shows here once in a while. Over there's the Public Library. Yes, one of Andy's. But Andy didn't have anything to do with the Board of Trade building yonder—that three-story. There's the Timrod Block. That went up in the last year and three others pretty near as big in the last two years. Going some—no?

This is the square. Our office is in the square. Eight months ago I was jammed in the depot, and it wasn't any such a tight fit, at that. Like to take a look at it? No? Well, we'll go up to the joint. We'll give you a shake-down with us to-night and let you pick a boarding-house to-morrow. In fact, I've got one already picked."

"Who are 'we'?" Alonzo asked.

"Millie," replied Bliss.

"Just a little more, please, if there's plenty."

"Oh! Millie's my sister. I guess I didn't tell you about her. She's teaching biology up at the college. That's another thing we've got here—the dandiest little college that you ever—"

Sawyer stopped short and dropped his suit-case and folded his arms. "You'll excuse the interruption, but you've got it wrong," he said. "I'm going to that hashery you've got selected right now. I'm not going to put you and Mil—er—Miss Bliss to the trouble of shaking down anything for me. Do you apprehend me?"

Bliss simply picked up the suit-case and started on. After a moment or two, Sawyer reluctantly followed him. In a little while, they arrived at a quiet street, and Billie stopped before the double entrance of a modest house. "We've got the upper floor," he informed his guest, as he fumbled for a key. "Two rooms, a linen closet, a kitchenette and bath and balcony. Up the stairs with you. Here we are. Oh, Millie! Mil-lee!"

"Coming," responded a pleasant-sounding voice. "I hear you."

"Sit down," commanded Bliss, and Alonzo gloomily obeyed. Biology! Holy Vassar! This was indeed a treat. Probably wore the same kind of glasses Billy did.

Alonzo got up awkwardly as he heard quick, light footsteps, and then, although he was usually a remarkably self-possessed young man, his mouth opened in a positive gape, and a blush mantled on his cheek and rose to the roots of his hair, forming a most inharmonious composition of reds. This was because he was surprised. Female teachers of biology may be quite generally ridiculously young, distractingly pretty and attract-



"I never heard him speak of you," Alonzo answered, "—never once.

Not one single time has he ever mentioned you, and he's always pretended to be my friend." He turned and gazed reproachfully at Bliss.

ively fluffy, but one somehow has a different idea of them. They don't suggest a pleasing degree of plumpness, pearly flesh-tints, blue eyes and hair ribbons and very high-heeled slippers, size 3AA; nor yet little frocks of the kind that Miss Millie Bliss was wearing. The apron that covered her dress, considered by itself and apart, was not frivolous. It was a striped gingham affair, large, plain and with no pretension to fit, but on Miss Millie it became at once a highly becoming, and even coquettish, garment.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Sawyer," said this phenomenon, holding out a small hand. "I've often heard Billie speak of you." There was a sort of mocking, twinkling primness in the last remark.

"I never heard him speak of you," Alonzo answered, "—never once. Not one single time has he ever mentioned you, and he's always pretended to be my friend." He turned and gazed reproachfully at Bliss.

"You're under my roof, and I'm too much of a gentleman to contradict you," said William Huntingdon Bliss. "I'll tell you later what he said when I showed him your picture, Millie. Now how about the eats?"

"Come and see for yourselves," his sister replied. "If I do say it myself—well, I'll let you say it. Come, Mr. Sawyer, if you don't mind eating in the kitchen." "Do I mind?" said Alonzo. "Will I come!"

IT may have been the coffee that kept Alonzo from sleeping that night. It was remarkably good coffee, and he drank a great deal of it quite unconsciously. In fact, the general impression

on the young man's mind was that everything was good, although he never quite remembered what it was he ate. Some sort of ambrosia in various forms adaptable to a three-burner gas-plate—an Olympian feed altogether.

That girl teaching biology? Sawyer grinned at the light from the lamp-post across the street. Why not? If she told the faculty that she wanted to teach it, they'd have to let her. If it was Mosaic Hebrew or hydraulic engineering, it would be just the same; she'd smile and they would hand it to her.

"I'll bet she has an interested class and a regular attendance," he murmured. He felt a certain remorse for neglected educational opportunities, nevertheless; and when he finally drowsed into slumber he was hazily wondering whether it were not too everlastingly late to make up for his foolish indifference to an important branch of science.

As he walked with Billie to the office the next morning, his resolution to attend strictly to business was nothing less than steely.

By daylight, Rankin City certainly had less of a metropolitan aspect. The square was by no means thronged, and buildings and street vistas seemed to have shrunk to some extent. The Eden office was sandwiched between a cigar store and bootblackening stand and a one-price clothing emporium, and it struck Sawyer as dingy and dinky. Billie Bliss' satisfaction, however, was evident, and he dwelt on every part of its equipment with managerial satisfaction. "Some office, eh, Lonnie?"

"Some office, believe me, boss," Alonzo agreed.

"Now sit down and I'll tell you all about it, and then I'll show you," said the boss, gravely. "To begin with, Lonnie, *that* doesn't go."

"No, sir," Sawyer respectfully acquiesced. He put his sack of Herefordshire back into his pocket and pinching his cigarette-paper to a wad, flicked it over the counter. "Sorry, sir. Please overlook it this time, sir."

"And you'll excuse me if I observe that the Eden's desks are not supposed to be used for foot-rests," Bliss went on,

unsmilingly. "I'm not fooling, Lonnie. Don't get the idea that there's any joke about this office, or that I hired you with any other idea than making you earn your pay three times over. I've done that myself, and I intend to go right on doing it. A man wont amount to two whoops who isn't willing to. If you put anything like the energy, ingenuity and persistence into this job that you used to apply to devilment when we were at school, you'll score big. I told Millie that when I wrote to you. But you've got to control your sense of humor in office hours and above all treat everybody with courtesy. That's the Company's policy. I know you'll take this in good part, Lonnie."

Here William Huntingdon Bliss smiled in the old way and put his hand on Sawyer's shoulder. "It's all right, isn't it? You understand and you're going to stick?"

"I get you, Billie," Alonzo answered soberly, "and I'm going to stick. Now show me what I've got to do."

IN the week that followed, Alonzo showed that he understood perfectly, and he went at his work with a zest that astonished Billie Bliss. Toward the patrons of the office he maintained a quiet dignity of manner; his patience was incredible, and it was often tried. No trouble was too great for him to take, and he showed the same consideration for the poorest, slouchiest and most irritatingly obtuse old farmer as he did for the town potentate, Callaghan—he of the opera house and other enterprises.

He had installed himself in the boarding-place that Billie had recommended. His landlady took an instant interest in him and made him so comfortable that he felt ashamed every time he paid her the insignificant weekly sum that had been arranged. It was nearly a week before he spent another evening at Billie Bliss'. Billie had been afraid that he felt a lurking soreness because of that initiatory plain talk. It seemed not, however. As Alonzo put it, "an elegant time was had." There was a little old piano in Billie's front room. Age had told on it so that it roared all along the keyboard and the loud pedal

squeaked most divertingly, a sort of plaintive protest against extra strain. Millie played. She was not a finished artist, it must be confessed, but her audience was not exacting.

"I don't know a thing about music, but I know what I like," Alonzo told her.

He looked deep into her blue eyes as he said it, and his ardent expression left no doubt as to what he liked.

Alonzo played, too—ping-a-pong accompaniments to college songs that he sang better than he played. Billie Bliss sat back in a corner in his big armchair chanting a deep bass and waving time with his pipestem. Afterwards, there were good, gay talk and laughter and coffee; but Alonzo shook his head seriously on the way home. He had an instinctive sense that this sort of thing wasn't going to do at all.

"I've got to cut it out," he said to himself. He did show remarkable restraint. For a week at a time, he would rigorously deny himself an evening with Billie, and then perhaps there would be two, or even three, evenings consecutively; but on the whole, he did very well. Sometimes there was other company at the little flat. Billie seemed to have several young men friends. Sometimes there were girls, or either more or less mature college people. In particular, there was a stoutly built man with a broad and very white forehead and a sparse, silky yellow beard. Miessner, his name was, and it seemed he was a professor of geology and metallurgy at the college. Sawyer didn't like him a little bit, but Millie appeared to find him interesting. She and Miessner had little discussions on quite abstruse subjects, and then Alonzo was obliged to recognize a different Millie altogether—a Millicent, serious, keen, logical, informed and, worst of all, interested.

On one or two of these occasions, Alonzo had interrupted with irrelevant and unseemly observations and had been properly snubbed by Miss Bliss, to the undisguised amusement of Eudora Callaghan. Eudora was a black-eyed, mischievous little piece whose brother, heir apparent to the house of Callaghan, was a great admirer of Millie and a frequent

visitor. Alonzo liked Miss Callaghan better than he did her brother. A mighty nice little girl, who could hold up her end with any of them—come right back at you every time.

"That ought to hold you for a while, Mr. Sawyer," she said to Alonzo. "You *will* take pepper in your ice-cream, will you?"

"I'm so polite I'll take anything that's handed to me," Alonzo replied, glumly.

"I've heard that you were polite, but I never believed it."

"I wish you'd take a little notice of me."

"I have—altogether too much. I said you might call when you asked permission, and you haven't been near the house. I'm deeply hurt."

"I'll be up there, tintinnabulating with the bells, bells, bells," Alonzo assured her, and at that moment, Millie finished her little argument with Miessner and came up with an amply atoning smile.

"I wish I were a tertiary tadpole, Millie," sighed Alonzo, as he said good-bye. By that time, it was "Millie" and "Lonnie."

She laughed and gave him the quick, firm handshake that he found so unsatisfactory. It was like a boy's. "Don't talk nonsense to me, Lonnie," she said.

"Well, make me out a list of a few elementary text-books on biology," he proposed. "I've got to talk to you about something."

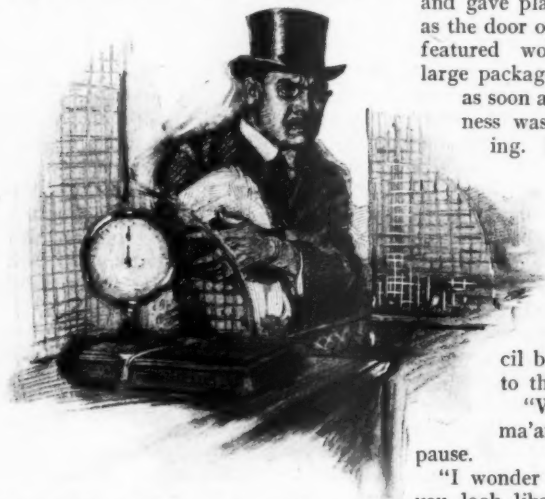
Actually he did go around to the Carnegie and cram Johannes Müller, Lamarck, Schleiden, Galton and other authorities on evolution, germinal continuity and cell theory. Some time later he quite casually mentioned to Millie that certain ideas of Galton's had never seemed perfectly clear in his mind. For instance—

Millie was considerably astonished, but she explained those points to him lucidly and at length.

IN the Rankin City office of the express company there was conspicuously displayed a placard requesting the general public to report to headquarters any incivility or inattention on the part of employees. The same placard met the

eye of the general public in every other Eden office. Henry J. Brunsmut, President of the company, conceived this idea. Said Mr. Brunsmut in a rarely candid moment, "If you have a cat to skin, it is desirable to make the operation as pleasant for the cat as circumstances will permit."

Now, Mr. Brunsmut was a president who did not confine himself to presiding, and while he had a General Manager,



A very gruff and rasping voice interrupted the inspection. "When you have a minute or two to spare, young man, I'd like you to give me a little attention."

some Assistant General Managers and Superintendents galore, he liked to do a little active managing and superintending himself. So, although he kept matters and things pretty well in hand at headquarters in Chicago, his private car was never out of commission, and he had a way of dropping in at branches in New Orleans, Seattle, Schenectady, St. Paul and other places that was disquieting to the branches but had a salutary effect upon the service. There was no foolishness about Henry J. The incompetents that he found were asked to resign; the careless were dismissed; and the impolite were summarily bounced.

Exactly seven months and six days from the time that Alonzo Sawyer had entered the Eden's employment, Mr.

Henry J. Brunsmut's car was switched to a side-track at Painesville, and the President unostentatiously boarded the accommodation and got off at Rankin City, seven miles distant.

Alonzo was alone in the office. His coat was off and he was busily engaged with a batch of way-bills, a pleasing picture of industrious application. A frown was on his brow, a frown of concentration, but it disappeared instantly and gave place to an ingratiating smile as the door opened and an elderly, hard-featured woman entered, carrying a large package. Sawyer was at the grille as soon as she. By the time her business was concluded, she was smiling. He not only wrapped and tied her package, but addressed and sealed it.

He returned to his column of figures, finished his addition and began checking. The door opened again, and again he thrust his pencil behind his ear and hastened to the grille.

"What can I do for you, ma'am?" he inquired, after a pause.

"I wonder if you have any idea what you look like, grinning' in that cage?" murmured Miss Eudora Callaghan, reflectively. Then she said, "Is Mr. Bliss in?"

"I'm sorry, ma'am, but he's out," Alonzo replied, gravely. Whereupon Miss Callaghan went around the cage to the counter and fumbled at the latch of the little wicket.

"If you'll kindly take a seat—" suggested Sawyer, blandly, indicating the bench outside. "But it's uncertain when Mr. Bliss will be in. If there's any message that you would care to leave?"

"I'll tell him myself. Are you going to undo this door for me, or do you intend to have me climb over? I'm going to report you for incivility."

Sawyer opened the wicket. The young woman swept by him, threw her shopping-bag and gloves on Billie's desk and seated herself in Billie's swivel chair. Alonzo went back to his desk and thumbed over his way-bills. It must be

admitted that the figures he jotted down had nothing to do with the bills. Apparently Miss Callaghan was suffering with a slight bronchial affection.

"Dear me!" she said, after the lapse of a minute or two.

Sawyer took down a letter-case from a shelf, made a quick reference and replaced it; then he wrote more figures, glancing from time to time at the sheaf of yellow papers in his left hand.

"I'm afraid his health will break down if he works like this all the time,"

Alonzo threw down his pencil and sniggered perforce. "Well, Miss Eudora, what's on your mind?" he asked, amiably.

"He speaks! Oh, joy!" exclaimed Eudora, audibly aside. "Oh, good-morning, Mr. Sawyer. You're busy, aren't you?"

"Not just at this minute," replied Alonzo, perceptibly weakening. She had very delicate eyebrows,



Alonzo had seated himself on the desk. Naturally, to examine the ring, he had to adjust the hand that wore it, to the proper focus. It was a nice little hand, pleasantly soft and warm—pretty little fingers with rosy tips.

prettily arched over mirthful dark eyes, and a slightly tip-tilted little nose that went well with a provocative mouth.

"Don't let me keep you from your work—please!"

"I don't see how I'm going to help it," said Alonzo. "There's something disorganizing about you. You'd throw an adding-machine out of kelter if you got within ten feet of it, if anybody should ask me. . . . What did you want to whisper in Billie's shell-like ear?"

"I wanted him to bring Millie over

the young woman soliloquized. "It doesn't seem human."

Sawyer tore a sheet from his pad, laid it aside and began on another. Miss Callaghan's cough interrupted again.

"I wonder if I dare speak to him," she murmured. "He has always been perfectly gentle with me, but of course this is his busy day. Still, if I could only say just one little word."

to-night," said Miss Callaghan. "I wonder if you would come, too? If you can't, perhaps I could coax Mr. Miessner. I think Mr. Miessner's perfectly lovely, don't you? Of course I know you never go anywhere except to Mr. Bliss',—once in a while,—but then Mr. Bliss will probably be there, and—oh, I want you to see my new ring. It was grandmother's and she gave it to me yesterday. Isn't it the quaintest, sweetest little thing you ever saw?"

Alonzo had seated himself on the desk and he now bent over to examine the ring. Naturally he had to adjust the hand that wore it to the proper focus. It was a nice little hand, pleasantly soft and warm—pretty little fingers with rosy tips.

A very gruff and rasping voice interrupted the inspection. "When you have a minute or two to spare, young man, I'd like you to give me a little attention."

Sawyer slid off the desk and hastened to the grille, through which a stoutly-built, middle-aged man regarded him with distinct disapproval.

"—If you're quite sure that you're at leisure," added the stout man, sarcastically. He had a sarcastic sort of mouth, fringed with a grizzled mustache that looked as if he had trimmed it himself. He had no chin; it was jaw all the way around and plenty of it. He wore steel-rimmed eyeglasses through which steel-gray eyes gleamed arrogantly.

"I'm quite at your service, sir," said Alonzo. "I didn't hear you come in. Very sorry."

"Don't mention it," said the stout man, disagreeably. "My time isn't at all valuable in comparison with yours, I suppose. Tell me how much it will cost to send this to Littleton, and be quick about it."

"Certainly," said Alonzo, promptly, and raising the grille, he took the package and weighed it. "What does this contain, please?" he asked.

"Is that any of your business?" demanded the other.

"Personally, of course it isn't," Sawyer answered, with unabated good humor, "but the Company requires a state-

ment of the contents of any package in order to classify it. If you don't mind, I shall have to ask you to put a valuation on it as well."

"In order to decide whether it's worth stealing, I suppose. Well, you can call it bone meal and bric-a-brac and put the value at five dollars."

"Thank you," said Alonzo. "That will be just one dollar and eighty-five cents."

"What!" It was literally a roar.

"One dollar and eighty-five cents to Littleton."

"What kind of a hold-up are you trying to work on me, young fellow? You'd better be a little careful." Venomous accusation was in his tone.

Alonzo was sympathetic and explanatory. "It may seem a little excessive, but when you consider the distance—sixty-five miles, you know—and the Company's responsibility for safe delivery, it's really moderate. If it were simply bone meal, it might go under Class 15, perishable foodstuffs—or it might be considered as fertilizer—but the rate for the two is the same. Including bric-a-brac puts it into the fragile section, 23n."

There was a short silence, broken only by a half-smothered giggle from Miss Callaghan.

"Are you guessing at this? Is that the way you do business here?"

With perfect and quite unostentatious patience, Alonzo produced his rate-book, turned instantly and unerringly to the schedule, and then to Littleton: One-eighty-five it was, and the stout man rudely threw down a five-dollar bill.

"Now," said he, as he pocketed the change, "I'll give you a piece of advice. You want to attend to your business better. You want to quit lallygagging around in business hours with a parcel of foolish girls who haven't any more sense than to—"

"Excuse me a moment," Alonzo interrupted.

He stepped around to the little wicket, unlatched it and flung it open with a jerk that broke a hinge. The next moment, the stout man felt himself grasped by the collar of his coat and the slack of his trousers and impelled swiftly to the

door. There he experienced a sudden and violent shock and shot out across the sidewalk and into the street, alighting principally on his waistcoat. It was a matter of seconds.

The first impulse of the ejected one, after he had picked himself up, was to re-enter the office. He was a fighting man and a man who kept himself in tolerably good physical trim. He had been taken by surprise and at a disadvantage, but he was not whipped. The only thing that checked that first impulse was his quick realization that there had apparently been no spectators of the ignominious occurrence. The office door was closed, and the two or three people who seemed to be noticing him at all were almost incurious in their regard. They probably thought he had accidentally stumbled and fallen without any serious damage; therefore he merely dusted himself with a fine assumption of nonchalance and walked rather stiffly back to the hotel.

Sawyer, having closed the door, went to the wicket and examined the hinge. "I'm afraid I've broken a Company rule, too," he said to Miss Callaghan, with a rueful grin. "I must have lost my temper a little—but there *are* limits."

IT was late in the afternoon when Billie came in, and he had some interesting news to impart to his assistant. "Who do you think has been here, Lonnie?" he said. "Henry J., our venerated President. Ran against him in Callaghan's office, and I've been with him the best part of an hour and a half. I'll bet I've lost five pounds. Talk about a Turkish bath! Phew!" Billie wiped his forehead with his handkerchief and then dabbed the palms of his hands. "Sweat-box," he added, "and then—Hello, who smashed that hinge?"

"I'll tell you about that," said Sawyer. "Is he coming here?"

"No," Billie answered. "He left on No. 16. Seemed satisfied with what I had to tell him, anyway. Burkholder was with him, and Fisher and Callaghan. By the way, he made a few inquiries about you. There's nothing too trifling for Henry J. to inquire about."

"Much obliged for the send-off you

gave me," said Alonzo. "Did you suggest a raise?"

"I did not," replied Billie. "I intimated that you were fairly satisfactory, though. That was in self-defense, seeing I had hired you. Fisher put in a good word for you, too, and so did Callaghan. Callaghan, I infer, has got quite a bunch of Eden stock. Somebody has been knocking you, though, Lonnie." He frowned thoughtfully.

"Yes?" Alonzo said, a little anxiously.

"I don't quite understand it," said Billie. "If I didn't positively know that you were a reformed character—well, we'll hope for the best. Who wrecked that door?"

Alonzo related the circumstances and Billie looked particularly sober. "What could I do?" Alonzo asked.

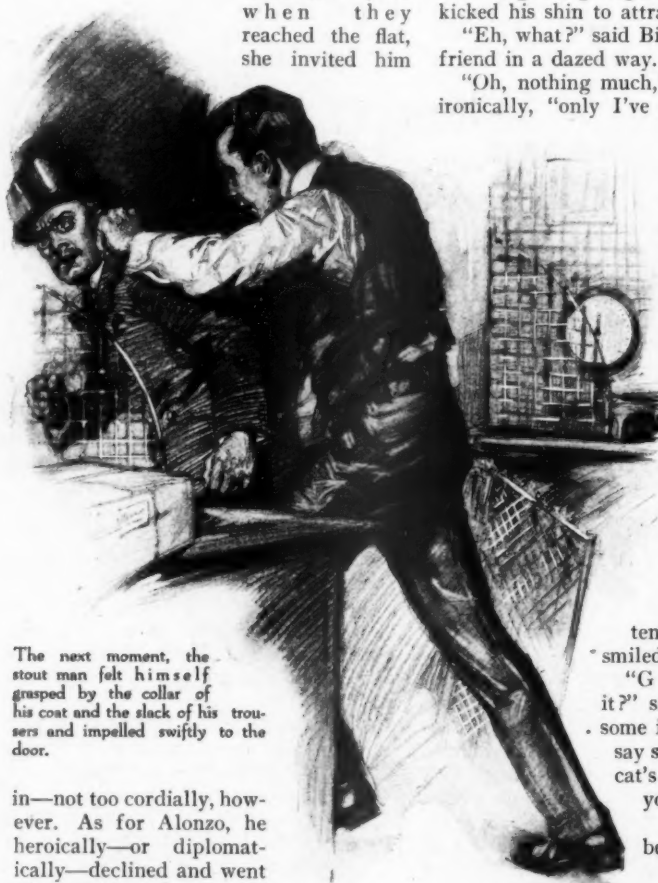
Alonzo hoped for the best, but he felt particularly uneasy. For half a year he had rigorously abided by his new rules of conduct, and now, just as they were becoming settled habits—bing! A Jane! Scrapiness! And a great deal depended upon this particular job.

But—as he had asked Billie—what could he have done? And little Eudora—Miss Callaghan had shown so much honest concern, had reproached herself so genuinely for having, in her spirit of mischief, given occasion for misunderstanding, that Alonzo had found it difficult to reassure her and laugh the matter off.

When he went up to the Callaghan mansion that evening, he noticed that Miss Callaghan's manner toward him was far less vivacious than usual. She did one thing for which Alonzo felt that he ought to be grateful—monopolized Mr. Miessner. In fact, she made what might be called a dead set at him, and Miessner seemed to be pleased and flattered. So Alonzo had Millie to himself for one happy half-hour and some extra minutes, during which he forgot his troubles. It would have been strange if he had not. Millie's blue eyes had never shown more brightly; her cheeks had never been pinker or her frequent laughter more musical. Lately Alonzo had been afraid he was losing ground with Millie, but as they walked home together—Billie Bliss and Miessner fol-

lowing—the young man had a blessed feeling that it was all right. He even felt sorry for the pedagogical dub behind.

Millie must have felt sorry for Mr. Miessner too, for when they reached the flat, she invited him



The next moment, the stout man felt himself grasped by the collar of his coat and the slack of his trousers and impelled swiftly to the door.

in—not too cordially, however. As for Alonzo, he heroically—or diplomatically—declined and went off whistling.

Nothing happened the next day, but on the morning succeeding, the mail-carrier dropped two letters bearing the Eden return notice, on Billy's desk. One was addressed to Wm. Bliss and the other to A. Sawyer. A. Sawyer read his first. It was from the General Manager's office and curtly ordered him to report to the General Manager at Chicago "upon receipt of this."

"Billy," said Alonzo, in doleful accents, "I've got mine."

Billy made no answer. He was intent on his own letter, which was of considerable length, and judging by the expression of his face, of considerable importance. He read it over twice and was beginning again, when Alonzo kicked his shin to attract his attention.

"Eh, what?" said Billie, staring at his friend in a dazed way.

"Oh, nothing much," replied Sawyer, ironically, "only I've got a large-sized

hunch that that yahoo I kicked out of here has made his holler. That's all." He tossed over the letter.

Billie folded his own communication and put it into his breast pocket. With the same absent expression, he took Sawyer's note and read it.

"H-m-m-m!" was his only comment. He frowned portentously and then smiled foolishly.

"Good joke, isn't it?" said Alonzo, with some irritation. "Well, say something, for the cat's sake! What do you think?"

"I think you'd better go," Billie answered dreamily. Rousing himself, he

consulted his watch and added, "You've got half an hour to make the train."

Alonzo went. He was decidedly hurt at the way Billie had taken the matter. It was a foregone conclusion that the yahoo's complaint meant dismissal. Billie knew that and yet showed almost no concern. At the same time, Billie was his friend. To doubt that would be to doubt everything. Another thing, Billie had objected to a written resignation

instead of a report in person, which Alonzo had proposed. "And don't get gay, on any account," was his last caution.

By a little after two o'clock, Alonzo found himself looking at a square of ground glass on which was painted the legend, "General Manager." "Ought to be 'Dispensary,'" he soliloquized. "Well, here goes to take my medicine." From the General Manager's he was sent to the President's office.

He entered. Half an hour elapsed, however, before he was ushered into the presence. There were fully sixty seconds in every minute of that half-hour. Alonzo counted them.

President Henry J. Brunsmitt was seated at a flat-top desk. He was a stoutly built man of middle age with a stubby, grizzled mustache, effectively but badly trimmed. He wore steel-rimmed eyeglasses and his eyes had a cold and steely gleam as he looked up.

"Oh, ve-ry well!" said Sawyer—mentally.

"Take a seat, Mr. Sawyer," invited the President, courteously. "I must apologize for keeping you waiting."

They looked at each other.

"Perhaps you recognize me, Mr. Sawyer," Henry J. continued in the same smooth, even tone.

"Certainly, sir," Alonzo answered, with a good imitation of it.

"That being the case, you will not be at a loss to imagine my reason for asking you to call on me."

"I imagine you want to inform me personally that the Company has decided to accept my resignation." Sawyer smiled as pleasantly as a pugilist shaking hands with a prospective antagonist.

Henry J. leaned back in his chair and crossed his legs. "I was not aware that you had resigned, Mr. Sawyer," he observed.

"The moment I entered the room, sir."

"In anticipation—?"

"Exactly."

"It did not occur to you that I might have been willing to consider any explanation that you wished to make? No? Or that I might accept a proper apology? No apology to make, eh? You consider, then, that you were entirely justified."

"Not at all," replied Alonzo. "I wasn't."

"You admit that I was in the right, then?"



"I think that you ought to have been kicked," said Alonzo, simply.

The President uncrossed his legs and swinging around to his desk, began to write. Sawyer got up, but at Mr. Brunsmitt's peremptory gesture sat down again. The President took his time, but finally folded what he had written, enclosed it in an envelope and addressed it.

"You may be right, Mr. Sawyer," he said, with a dignity that impressed the young man in spite of himself. "I agree with you so far as to regret my reference to the young woman—whose presence in the office you don't care to explain? No? Well, your resignation is accepted, to take effect at once. Perhaps you will oblige me by giving this to Mr. Bliss, if you are going back to Rankin City this evening?" He handed Sawyer the letter that he had just addressed.

"Yes, I'm going back, and I'll deliver it with pleasure," said Alonzo. "Good-day."

"Thank you," said the President, suavely. "Good-day, Mr. Sawyer."

BILLIE BLISS was not at the station when Alonzo arrived at Rankin City. He was at his desk, hard at work. "I'm fired," announced Alonzo, succinctly. "Here's a letter for you."

Billie took the letter without a word, opened it and read it, and then passed it to his friend.

With further reference to the subject of my letter of the 23d, you will arrange to take charge at Nashville by the 3d, instant. Mr. Corless has instructions. That will give you ample time to turn Rankin City over to your successor. Your assistant, Mr. Sawyer, has resigned, so that there may be two new men for you to break in. If, however, Mr. Sawyer is willing to take your place at the salary you are now receiving, he may consider himself appointed, and I will send him an assistant. I think, from what I have heard and observed, that I can rely upon his discretion (and yours) as well as his ability. Please advise me on receipt of this.

BRUNSMIT.

Sawyer sank limply into a chair and let the letter flutter from his fingers to the floor.

"I didn't tell you everything that Henry J. asked about you, nor what other evidence he collected," Billie chuckled. "Little Eudora Callaghan breezed in on us, for one thing. She's discreet, too, although you mightn't

always think it. A good friend of yours, Alonzo. Well, tell me about your interview. You don't seem as tickled over this as I thought you would be."

OUT of the chaos in Sawyer's mind one question took form. He managed to put it with an air of carelessness.

"How does Millie like the idea of leaving Rankin City?"

"She's not going to leave," said Billie, beaming at him. "That's another bit of news for you. She's going to marry Miessner. Surprise to me. I knew, of course, that he was rushing her, but I didn't suspect anything definite until last night. It seems they had a spat about something and it came to a show-down after you left us. Anyway, it's settled. —Where are you going, Lonnie?"

"Bed," answered Alonzo, faintly, and the faintness was very little exaggerated. His naturally philosophical and optimistic spirit had enabled him to face the loss of his job with a certain equanimity, and lo! defeat had flowered into triumph that in a twinkling had been blasted and withered beyond hope of revival. What could life hold for him now!

"I'm not used to excitement and I need rest," he went on to explain. "Oh, extend my congratulations—"

The telephone bell rang.

"I think that's for you, Lonnie," said Billie, with a queer little smile, as he took up the receiver. "Hello, Eudora! Yes, he's here. Just got in. All right! The finest kind. Your friend, Mr. Brunsmitt, has given him the agency here. He takes my place. So am I. Want to talk to him? Well, he wants to talk to you, anyway."

He turned to Sawyer, who had jumped up with remarkable eagerness and was standing by his elbow. Also, the expression on Alonzo's face had brightened remarkably.

"Lonnie, Miss Callaghan is on the wire."

Another of Kennett Harris' good-humored stories
will appear in an early issue.

Hide-out

RAY SPRIGLE has a new sort of story to tell. That is why his stories win so much attention. This one is a study of the psychology of "Mickey the Rat."

By Ray Sprigle

Author of those four remarkable stories, "The Long Road," "Romance," "The Escape of Bill Newlands" and "McTeague Gets Out The Vote."

ILLUSTRATED BY J. HENRY

SOME freakish fancy impelled his mother to name him Harold. Why Harold, or where she even heard the name, none ever could tell. Harold Kenna was his full name, and he bore it just so long as his infancy lasted. The first day he joined the toddlers in the street, Harold Kenna became Mickey, and Mickey it remained to the end—with additions, however.

Mickey was a product of the slums. His only recollections of his father were of a black-browed, shifty-eyed individual, who, when he was not drunk and cruel, was sober and cruel. He dropped out of Mickey's life one day when Mickey was twelve, after beating the boy's mother into insensibility, and materially damaging young Mickey, who unluckily (for Mickey) crossed his path.

The elder Kenna was a teamster by profession—i.e. he professed to be a teamster. He did not disdain, however, to turn a more or less honest penny at election time by repeated voting. He dabbled in the art of pocket-picking—usually selecting only those victims who were too drunk to detect the flaws in his technique. Now and then more adventurous criminals engaged him as a "lookout" while they removed portable valuables from an uptown residence or store. In the intervals of these occupations he obtained necessary living expenses from Mickey's mother by the simple expedient of beating her unless she supplied them.

So Mickey's father did not stand high in Eighth Street society. Mickey was put to shame when other lads boasted—one of a father who was known from San Francisco to New York as a burglar; another of a paternal parent who had "bumped off" a policeman and had been promptly hanged for it; another of a father who was the most skillful "dip" on two continents. Mickey couldn't even boast of a parental picture in the Rogue's Gallery, and in Eighth Street, that placed one low in the social scale indeed.

Mickey's parents did not endow him with any pronounced qualities. This was unfortunate. When you are born into Eighth Street it is well to be born emphatically, either to extreme virtue, that will enable you to rise above Eighth Street, or extreme wickedness, that will enable you to rule Eighth Street. Mickey had neither. He went to the ward school until he was twelve, and then, his mother needing more funds to supply food than she was able to procure unaided, Mickey donned a messenger's uniform and began "hopping calls." He soon graduated to "bell-hop" in an uptown hotel. His education progressed with each new job, and it had carried him, when he left the hotel, to the point where it landed him in the House of Correction.

Perhaps it is not fair to his education to blame that for his detention in the House of Correction; it was rather Mickey's failure properly to assimilate the education. He learned enough to

steal two rings a woman guest left in her room when she went shopping, and pawn them. He didn't learn enough to dispose of the pawn tickets; and when he was arrested they were found in his pocket.

After that, Mickey's career began to be checkered by frequent trips to prison; first the House of Correction and later the workhouse, and finally he achieved his first "bit"—two years for pocket picking. Mickey seemed doomed to mediocrity too, as his father had been. He never could muster either the courage or the wit to accomplish a really big crime.

When a man gets started, it is easy to keep on visiting the penitentiary. Mickey "went up" for varying terms, seldom for more than two or three years. Five years for a burglary was his longest sentence up to the time he was forty, and of the twenty-three years of his life since he was seventeen, fifteen had been passed in prison. Five sentences covered the fifteen years.

In those days there was no habitual criminal act, under which a criminal upon his third conviction may be sentenced to life imprisonment. Mickey was one of the reasons for the passage of the habitual criminal act. And yet the mediocrity of his criminal career was reflected in the name bestowed upon him, "Mickey the Rat."

Mickey was not ignorant. He read the daily papers, even the editorials. He realized that crime was not a paying profession, even for the best criminals. Each time he was released from the penitentiary, he resolved to lead an honest life—but a "stake" is necessary to sustain any life at all, while one is looking for a job. It was the getting or the attempting to get that "stake" that put Mickey back into the penitentiary each time.

Mickey was in a bad business—speaking now not from a moral standpoint. He was liable to so many "vocational diseases" that an insurance company would have insured a nitro-glycerin manufacturer as readily as he. He was underpaid. His "hauls" scarcely kept him in decent food and clothing in the intervals when the State was not providing food, clothing, shelter, entertainment—and a number for him. All in

all, Mickey's was not a "good job," in the parlance of the laborer.

He was not particularly unfortunate. He never was unjustly accused. The police never persecuted him. The worst they did when he was "outside" was to watch him. He never felt himself the victim of oppression. He would have told you, had you asked him, that, all things considered, he had received a square deal from the world. Only, he would add, things had not "broken right."

Outside the penitentiary walls Mickey was harmless and inoffensive—if one considers the illicit acquisition of a pocketbook or the family silver inoffensive and harmless. He never engaged in brawls; he did not drink to excess. He could not even bear the smell of cigarettes. He had a novel-engendered high regard for what he vaguely called "good women;" he longed for a chance to be knight errant to some damsel in distress whom he should meet in the street or while robbing her home.

So you see that, allowing for differences in occupation, Mickey was not greatly different from the type of man who grows quietly and uneventfully into bookkeeping or cravat-selling old age. But Mickey in prison was far different. His mind worked differently.

For instance, one Sunday afternoon he laughed for a quarter of an hour in front of the monkey's cage at the Zoo, when the monkey stood, madly grimacing and chattering his rage in impotent sound and gesture. The monkey's rage and his method of evincing it were foolish, laughable, thought Mickey. Therefore Mickey laughed. Three months later, when he had been sentenced for a petty burglary and was on his fourth "bit," he arose at midnight and for two and a quarter hours banged on the front door of his cell with his wash-basin and screamed until his throat was sore. Two thousand other convicts did the same thing at the same time. Had you asked any one of them why he banged and yelled, he would have been bewildered for a reply. There was no complaint regarding food and work. None imagined that he might win freedom by banging a tin wash-basin against cell bars, or by

screaming. They just did it—did it because they were convicts. Among them were men who had held responsible positions in banks, a baker's dozen of lawyers—mechanics and men from every walk of life.

At another period Mickey carefully secreted a bit of bread in his shirt at each meal and carried it back to his cell, where it was hidden under his mattress. He had absolutely no intention or hope of escaping; he just hid it. By and by it became odorous and moldy, and he threw it into his slop can. The man in the cell next his had been, in the outer world, an engraver and had turned counterfeiter. He also hid bread and threw it away, because—well, just because.

Don't imagine that Mickey or the engraver was becoming insane. Their minds were as well balanced as before their imprisonment. Only they had become convict-minds.

ALL prisons know the "hide-out." He is the convict, who, on the way to jute-mill or bolt-mill or rug factory or shovel-shop, where he performs his daily tasks, slips out of line and hides—hides anywhere he thinks he can escape notice: in a sewer, in a nook in the shop, in a loft. One man in Mickey's time, a bricklayer, hid three days by industriously laying up bricks around himself in the wall he was building, until he completely concealed himself. He was found when another bricklayer, beginning the second tier of masonry, dropped a brick into the dark hole he found in the wall, thereby startling the "hide-out" into revealing his hiding place and himself.

None of these "hide-outs" had any plan to escape. If their "hide-out" had been the cause of an opportunity to escape, of course they would have grasped it, but plan they had none. In the nature of their "hide-out," they were as effectively cut off from the outside as they were from discovery—the two were parallel. The majority of them were sincere when they explained to the warden that they had no intention of escaping—had not thought of it, in fact. Pathologically they had normal minds, but those minds were convict-minds.

Mickey, like every other convict in the

great prison, carefully followed the careers of these "hide-outs." And one day, only nine months from the time of his release by expiration of his sentence and while he had a parole application before the prison board, Mickey himself became a "hide-out."

It was the result of no plan. It was simple impulse. He had been firing the boilers of the bolt-shop, not a greatly arduous task, since the boilers and engines were small, and one Saturday afternoon he was drawing the fires from under the largest boiler. With a heavy iron rake, he was down in the ash-pit. He had drawn the coals from the fire-box and was scattering them so they would not burst into flame again, when his rake broke through the pile of ashes accumulated at the back of the pit. Through the resultant hole he could see a dark cavern extending under the boiler, back of the fire-box. Hastily he raked the live coals away and crawled back into the recess. He found the pit extended the full length of the boiler and back under the floor at the end opposite the fire-box. The pit had been designed for an old-fashioned boiler of greater size but less generative power and had not been altered when new boilers were installed. It left a space under the concrete floor, clear of the boiler, of probably eight feet long, five feet wide and four feet high.

Mickey hurled his rake out of the pit. He climbed back into the cavern and with his feet pushed the ashes back so that this hole of ingress again was concealed. He lay down and slept. He was a "hide-out."


IT was daylight when Mickey awoke. The flecks of light that crept through the pile of clinkers at the front of the hole told him that. It was Sunday, and so the bolt-shop would be idle this first day. Now and again as he lay there he heard feet over his head and knew that the search for him was on.

After hours of waiting, the spots of light began to dim and then faded out. He still waited, hunger growing keener each minute as he visioned the convicts in the great dining-room.

Then, bit by bit, he removed the

call of a guard on the high wall of the great prison. Then he heard the thud of a gun-butt on the masonry as the guard stopped to light pipe or cigarette.

Finally he was out,
alone in the
great, re-
sound-



cinders
that concealed his
hiding place. Inch by
inch he thrust his head out into
the cinder-pit. All about was silent.
Came to him faintly the sound of the

He raised one of
the windows and
slipped through.

ing engine-room. The
door leading to the outer
air was locked, and so he
carefully raised one of the
windows and slipped through.

Then, like an eel, flat on
his stomach, he wriggled

his way, foot by foot, along the wall of

the bolt-shop. He came to the corner and lay for an hour, until he had found every wall-guard and fixed his movements in mind.

It had been moonlight, but clouds had risen and slowly were dimming the bright light that flooded the prison yard. Those clouds, if they persisted, meant food to Mickey. He never could get across the wide yard in the moonlight. He would be shot before he went a score of feet.

In another hour a summer storm blew up out of the west. Jagged flashes of lightning cut the gloom for a moment and then left it more intense. Slowly Mickey wormed his way across the water-running ground. Finally he reached the kitchen wall. The door was locked, as he had supposed. His groping hands told him that the windows had been closed because of the rain.

The rain that had helped him in his passage across the yard, baffled him now! Despairingly, hunger gnawing ever more insistently, he crouched. He prepared to return. As he moved away from the window, his eyes lighted on the overflowing garbage can. Mickey smiled. He was saved. Hastily he delved into the refuse—an apple here, a tomato there, now a lump of meat, half a loaf of stale bread. Mickey blessed the kind fate that had made the present warden a "good feeder."

Fearful that the storm would end before he could get back to his hiding place, he crammed the food into his clothing and started back, again eel-fashion. He was almost to the wall of the bolt-shop when a vivid flash of lightning limned the prison-yard in greenish-yellow for half a dozen seconds. Mickey "froze" as it began. When it ended, he started to crawl again.

C-r-rack! Sput! A wall-guard had seen him! Sixteen times the rifle cracked, and all about him Mickey heard the soft thud of bullets going into the mud. With every nerve screaming to his brain agonized impulses to be up and running, Mickey lay still. Not a motion did he make while the bullets spattered around him. When the fusillade ended, there was mud on his face, splashed there by a bullet.

Then he began to crawl again—more swiftly now. He reached the wall of the bolt-shop and in its friendly shadow found his window and crawled through, closed it, grabbed a piece of waste from a work-bench and wiped his muddy shoes and the floor, and then shoved the waste into his pocket. He was safely in his hole with the ashes piled in front of him when he heard the thunder of heavily shod feet overhead.

Finally the sounds ceased. He lay back and munched contentedly at his meat and bread. The rest of his food he ranged about him for future needs.

BEFORE it grew light, Mickey heard the clatter of the iron rake on the firebox in front and above. Another had his old job now. Then came a flicker of yellow light as the fire was lighted under the boilers. He crawled as far back as he could, and it was long before he felt the heat.

But feel it he did at last. By the time the roar of the machines and the crash of the bolt-stamps over him was well begun, perspiration was pouring from him in streams.

Well! He was a "hide-out" for another day, sure. None could get past that barrier of fire under the boilers. But his air was shut off by fresh falls of cinders, and he felt unconsciousness coming. He took off his damp coat and wrapped it about his head. He loosened a brick in the floor of the pit and thrust his nose into the earth. He remembered nothing more then, until he awoke in the darkness and silence. Another day had passed. Weakly he made his way to the firebox, found it still hot and crawled back to his lair. A few hours later he tried it again, and despite the heat, kicked his way through the pile of ashes.

This night he did not leave the bolt-shop. He ventured no farther than the edge of the pit, where he gulped fresh air and waited for the air in his hole to clear. Then he went back and built up his concealing pile of clinkers again.

All Tuesday he lay through successive periods of realization and unconsciousness while heat fought with life. Life won, and when darkness came, Mickey waited until the firebox had cooled, to

make his way out again. That night his food, which he had husbanded as a cast-away on a desert island, gave out.

Wednesday he had to fight both hunger and heat. Wednesday night he crawled through the ashes. He made his way to the window. It was hopeless to attempt the prison yard. The soft summer moon made all as bright as day. So he slipped through the window, pulled a few handfuls of grass which grew along the wall, patting the earth to hide the traces of his foray, and went back to the hole. He was growing weak; he could scarcely climb back through the bolt-shop window. Garbage is not sustaining food. That night he ate his grass.

Thursday came. This time the glow of daylight instead of the clatter of poker and rake was his intimation of day. It was the Fourth of July, a holiday. He heard a few prisoners cleaning machines, and repairmen going over the bolt-stamps. Then silence again. He crawled through the clinkers. To-day he must have food. How?

The repairmen had left the door of the bolt-shop unlocked. Far down, through an alleyway between two buildings, he could see the big quadrangle where a few trees grew. Visitors and groups of prisoners in charge of guards were walking about the lawn. Off to the left, on the way toward the kitchen, lay the "idle-house," where infirm and imbecile prisoners were kept. At the doorway of the "idle-house" lolled a few of the inmates of this prison asylum for the unfit, with no guard in sight. The shops were deserted.

Mickey boldly stepped out of the doorway of the bolt-shop and walked toward the "idle-house." He had washed the dirt from his face and brushed the ashes off his gray clothes, so that he looked not unlike the other prisoners. His drawn, white face, with skin stretched by hunger, heightened the likeness to some of the "idle-house" inmates. Carelessly he joined the little group lolling in the sunshine. Then, nonchalantly, he strolled on toward the open door of the kitchen. Inside, the cook and his helpers were preparing the big holiday meal.

The big negro cook saw Mickey near the door.

"Get outa here," he snarled, and started toward Mickey, who scuttled back. Satisfied, the cook turned back to his ranges.

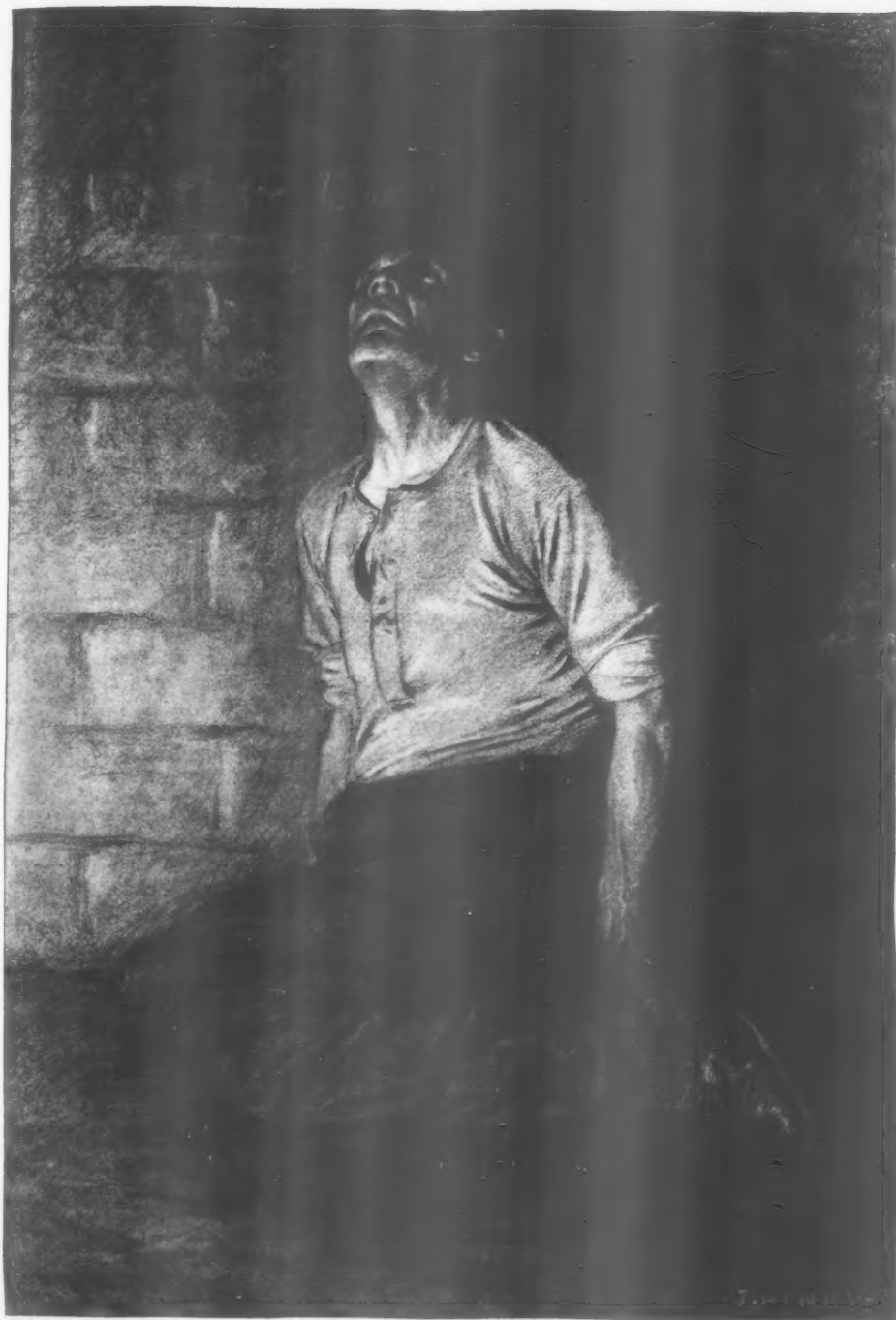
SWIFTLY Mickey turned and followed him. From a table just inside the kitchen door he seized a huge chunk of beef that was waiting to be cut up for the platter and whipped it under his coat. He whirled. So did the cook, but not in time to see Mickey take the meat. But his orders had been disobeyed, and with an oath he lumbered after Mickey, who was too weak to make much speed. The negro's foot caught him in transit, and he slid along the ground on his face, still clutching the beef. He scrambled to his feet and without a backward glance toward the kitchen, slipped into the group about the "idle-house" door.

Then he saw the blue and brass of a guard and turned his back. He was afraid some of his fellows would see the quivering of his trouser-legs. None did. The guard passed on with hardly a glance for these prison incompetents. Mickey waited no longer. He doubted if he had sufficient strength now to reach his refuge again. He strolled on, apparently aimlessly, but with the bolt-shop as his goal.

At last he reached the door, slipped inside, closed the door, and fell full length on the floor. He lay awhile and then crawled to the hydrant, where he drank. Then, on his knees, he struggled to his haven. Shakingly he piled up the ashes again and fell back exhausted. An hour later he began to gnaw his meat. It renewed his strength.

He slept fitfully that night and awakened in the darkness with deadly pain clutching his tortured stomach. The half-cooked meat, after long fasting, had been like a draught of poison.

The clatter of the fireman above, building the fires, had begun before the pain ceased. Then came the deadly heat again. Hour after hour, Mickey lay, the torrid blast wringing his very body away in streaming sweat. He made no attempt that night to leave the pit. He had only moments of consciousness now. He knew



The clatter of the fireman above, building the fires, had begun before the pain ceased. Then came the deadly heat again.

that he would only have to shout once or twice, and the cool white hospital, with its soft beds, convict-nurses, aproned physicians and dainty fare would be his. But the thought of giving up never entered his mind. Why, he was a "hide-out!"

Saturday came again, but Mickey did not hear the firemen build the fires that morning. It was the heat that awakened him. Early in the afternoon the fires were drawn again.

Mickey's racked body sensed the cessation of heat. Half involuntarily—he had ceased to think now—he clawed the ashes away and started to crawl. One hand broke through the dead clinkers and encountered the heat of live ones.

The burns roused him.

"God—I'm done," he gasped.

He was right. He was done.

Sunday morning the new fireman was released from his cell long enough to clean out his firebox and make ready for Monday morning. He raked his ashes from the firebox door. At the back he saw a curiously shaped clinker and stooped to pick it up.

He dropped it with a frightened oath.

The clinker was Mickey's hand.

BUT Mickey wasn't dead. He was a convict, and convicts are harder to kill than human beings.

Take a man: give him ill-fed, alcoholic, unhealthy, criminal, weak parents. Give him unsanitary, brutalizing environment as a child. Feed him unwholesome, insufficient food all his life. In most cases make him an alcoholic or a drug fiend. Begin locking him in narrow, dirty cells about the time he's ten years old and keep it up until he's forty, giving him intervals of freedom in which he further debauches his body. That's a convict—and he'll undergo hardship, he'll survive disease, cruelty, torture, thirst, hunger, misfortune and worse, if worse there be, that would cut down a eugenically conceived and born, trained athlete in a month.

And so Mickey wasn't dead. They took him to the hospital, and if he wasn't fed on "hospital dainties," he dined better than ever before in his life, for even

a prison hospital isn't a half bad place if you are looking for rest and peace.

Mickey was happy: how happy, only the chorus girl who leaps to stardom in a night, the lawyer's clerk who writes a famous play, the haberdashery salesman who falls heir to a million, can understand. For no longer was Mickey mediocre. He was somebody. People were interested in him. He sensed a new regard in the eyes of the convict-nurses in the hospital. Even his nickname was no longer a sneer at his courage. It became a tribute to unfathomable cunning, to perseverance, to cleverness—"Mickey the Rat."

So Mickey lay in the hospital and waited for his wrist. He had lost all his "good time," the time taken from his sentence because of good behavior. He would have to serve nearly a year and a half more without possibility of parole. He had lost a hand. But he had gained what to his mind was greater than all these—respect of his fellows.

"Lost a mit," he grinned one day to the assistant day surgeon, who was young and had a fancy to pry into the twists of the convict mind.

"No more coal shoveling for yours truly. Just lay back an' take it easy in the 'idle-house,' sit around and read all day and wait for them to call me to meals. Class? Eh?"

"Takes a wise guy to show these cons something. Well, I showed 'em what a real man can do when he wants to hide out. Seven days! Not so bad, eh?" said Mickey proudly.

Later he was talking to one of the nurses, also a convict.

"Some of these doctors must ha' been slighted when the brains were passed around," he said scornfully. "The young one wanted to know what I went on a hide-out for." And he laughed understandingly.

"Huh!" The convict-nurse laughed understandingly too.

But neither of them put into words the reason why Mickey had hidden out. There was no use. A convict didn't need words to understand. All the words in the world never would help one who was not a convict, to understand.

RUPERT HUGHES, that forceful writer of life as it is lived to-day in this country, is giving in "The Thirteenth Commandment," a brilliant picture of how the average American will give up his last dollar—or go in debt—to procure the luxuries of millionaires. The salaried man rides in taxicabs. He throws princely tips to waiters. He gives dinners at the most expensive hotels. He buys boxes at the theater. And so on up the list, with the women-folk applauding.

Daphne Kip, who belongs to a representative American family, is the heroine. She is a fresh, April-day sort of girl, who must have her electric car and the things that go with it because "other people" do. And Clay Wimburn, her lover, who has a good position with a New York house and a "bright future," goes in debt for Daphne's engagement ring.

The Kips live in Cleveland. So Daphne must buy her trousseau in New York. Her father puts a second mortgage on the last bit of property not already doubly borrowed on, to furnish the money, and Daphne and her mother fare forth to spend and be entertained by young Wimburn. They live in the expensive apartment of Bayard Kip, Daphne's brother, while in New York, as Bayard is in Europe on a honeymoon with his beautiful bride Leila, whom he has won in a race with Tom Duane, wealthy New York clubman.

DAPHNE is enchanted with the apartment and her stay. Wimburn lunches her and dines her at the finest hotels, gives theater parties, and they motor everywhere. It is not till the delighted girl suggests they look for an apartment like her brother's that she gets the first peep at the modern enemy of love. Wimburn lets her understand that twenty-five hundred a year for lodging

is beyond him. Daphne is perplexed and Wimburn unhappy. So they adopt the usual way of 1915 lovers, and put off an understanding of their financial condition till some other time.

Then comes a treat to Daphne in the shape of a supper at the Claremont after the theater one night. It is two days to Wimburn's pay-day, and he figures he can just make it. Daphne is charmed with the country-club effect of the famous little inn in the heart of the city of stone. Tom Duane is there entertaining a party of theatrical people. His munificence and interest in her give the final touches of glamour for Daphne. She wants a certain seat overlooking the Hudson. Wimburn tips the head waiter

five dollars to get it and then orders a delightful supper of which melon is a part. When the check comes, he is staggered. They have given him melon that has cost seventy-five cents the portion more than the kind he ordered. He cannot tip the waiter. Daphne is near tears at the scene.

OUTSIDE, Wimburn finds that he has not even carfare left. They must walk the four miles

or so to the Kip apartment. In his embarrassment he lets Daphne know that his bank account is also wiped out. Daphne, while bravely trying to bear up, is sick as she sees stretching out before her the kind of penny-fighting existence she always has hated so in her own home.

Finally Wimburn hits on the idea of hailing a cab, trusting to find a way to pay the driver when he gets to his club. Arrived at the apartment, Bayard Kip himself opens the door. Daphne and Wimburn had supposed them still in Europe, and are amazed to see them here.

"Money gave out, so we had to come home," laughs Kip. "What's the good word?"

"Lend me five dollars," answers Wimburn.

A Complete Résumé of the First Installment of RUPERT HUGHES' NEW NOVEL

The THIRTEENTH



Daphne Kip, the heroine.

A New Novel by the Author of
"What Will People Say?" and
"Empty Pockets."

By Rupert Hughes

CHAPTER XI

WOMEN hate one another when they are tired or disheveled. They loathe to be introduced when not at their best—when they are caught out in a second-rate costume, or caught in in a genuine negligee.

The meeting of Daphne and her new sister-in-law was anything but what either would have expected or selected.

Daphne was tired in body and soul, discouraged, foot-sore, and dismayed about her love and her lover. She had reached the door of the apartment in the mood of a wave-buffed, out-swum castaway, eager for nothing but to lie down on the sand and sleep.

When her brother opened the door, there was a flare of love and delight in her greeting. But in a moment she realized that the apartment was no longer hers. The rightful owners, the bride and groom, had come back. Their claim to solitude had some time to run, their honeymoon being still in the first quarter.

Daphne could imagine the feelings of her brother's wife when she reached her home after a long ocean voyage, a night landing, the customs-house ordeal, and the cab-ride among the luggage—and found a mother-in-law asleep in her bed and a sister-in-law yet to arrive.

Poor Mother Kip, worn out with

shopping and serene in the belief that Bayard and Leila were across the ocean, had gone to bed early. She was very much at home. She had been a trifle infected with the New York mania for beauty and had determined to take back to Cleveland a diminished array of wrinkles and one less chin. She had therefore harnessed herself for slumber in a face mask, a chin-reducing strap and rubber gloves.

Bayard and Leila, serene in the belief that Daphne and her mother had gone back to Cleveland, entered the apartment without formality and went about switching on lights, recovering their little home from the night with magic instantaneity.

Mother Kip's awakening came from the light that Bayard flashed in his bedroom. She did not recognize him at first and would have begun to shriek for the police if she had been a little less scared and her chin-strap a little more loose.

When Bayard caught sight of her with her rubber gloves clasped beneath her mask, he thought at first that a submarine diver had wandered in and fallen asleep. He did not recognize his mother till she spoke in a strangled tone, sat up and began to peel off her extra face.

Leila had a lovable disposition, but she was tired, and all the way up in the overloaded cab she had thought longingly of the beautiful bed in her own new home, and had promised herself a quick plunge into it, for a long stay. How could she rejoice to find a strange woman there?—even though she bore the sacred name of mother-in-law.

Mother Kip was horribly ashamed of being found with so much on. She

COMMANDMENT

The story of a girl's adventures with life in the busy years of 1914 and 1915.

Illustrated by
James Montgomery Flagg



Daphne's mother.

ordered Bayard and Leila from their own room, till she could get out of her mask and into her wrapper.

When she was ready to be seen, she had so many apologies to make and accept that the meeting entirely lacked the rapture that should have marked it. Even a mother could hardly be glad to see her son in such discouraging circumstances. All three exchanged questions more and more perfunctorily, and kept repeating themselves. The most popular question was, "I wonder where Daphne is?"

They could not know that she was trudging down the wilderness of Riverside Drive. She too was thinking of her bed. But long before she reached it, her mother had established herself in a good deal more than half of it. It was a smallish bed in a smallish bedroom.

This had been one of the attractive features of the apartment to Bayard and Leila when they chose it, for they said cannily that one of the safest things about a home is a guest-discouraging room. They had not expected poor Mother Kip and poor sister Daphne to be the first victims.

But Leila was too weary to care much. She was wearier still before she had remade her desecrated bed and unpacked a few things. She fell asleep in her tub and might have drowned without noticing the difference if her yawning husband had not saved her life ingeniously. He was too tired to lift her from the water, and so he lifted the stopper and let the water escape from her. She resented the rescue and eventually got herself to bed in a pretty stupor.

From some infinite depths of peace she was dragged up protestingly by Daphne's arrival and Bayard's summons. Doggedly she began to prepare an elaborate toilet, but Bayard haled her out before she was ready. This was the final test of Leila's patience and of Daphne's.

It was a tribute to both that they hated the collision more than each other. Their greetings were appropriately emotional and noisy, and both talked at once in a manner that showed a distinct congeniality.

When at length Daphne went to her room, she observed her mother's extra-territorial holdings. She stretched herself along the narrow coastline in despair of rest. But she was too tired to worry or lie awake, and she slept thoroughly.

THE next morning the three women, about to meet each other by daylight, made their preparations with the scrupulous anxiety of candidates for presentation at court. Leila had not yet recaptured the maid she left at her father's home, and she was dressing from her trunks. Daphne and her mother maided each other in a guest-room where there was everything but room.

In consequence, breakfast was late. The only man there, except the evanescent waiter from the restaurant below, was Bayard.

A troop of business worries, like a swarm of gnats, had wakened him early. He had escaped some of them in Europe, for the honeymoon had been a prolonged and beatific interlude in his office hours. But marriage was not his career. His career was his work, and that was recalling him, rebuking him, as with far-off bugle alarms.

He was so restless that he merely glanced at the headlines of the paper. He was preoccupied when he kissed his mother and Daphne good-morning, and he paced up and down the dining-room like a caged leopard till Leila arrived.

Her trousseau had included boudoir gowns of the most ravishing description. She wore her best one to breakfast. Daphne and Mrs. Kip made all the desirable exclamations at the cost and the cut of it. Even Bayard paid her a tribute.

"Isn't she a dream, Mother? Aren't you proud of her, Daf?"

They agreed that she was and they were. They sat down. Bayard drew his chair up to the table with pride, chuckling:

"I tell you, this being a man of family is the only life. I'm sorry for those poor bachelors at the club."

He rhapsodized politely for a time, and then his eye began to dwell more and more on the newspapers which he had left near his plate with clever carelessness. Soon his rhapsody was:

"I tell you it's good to be back here and get this morning's newspapers this morning. The last New York newspaper I saw was seven days ago, and it was eight days old. I feel like *Rip van Winkle*. I see by this morning's *Times* that—"

"Can't the papers wait?" said Leila, who did not care what he saw by the *Times*.

"Certainly, my love, of course," he laughed, and he threw the paper across the room, and making a pistol of his hand, loaded it with a kiss and fired it point-blank at her head. She shot him another, and everybody laughed warmly, and Bayard once more remarked that this was the life.

But his treacherous eyes kept sneaking over to the newspapers where they

lay with their headlines tantalizingly revealed in part. He was like a boy whose new toys have been taken from him and put on the mantelpiece.

The young bride's eyes were fastened on her husband. He was her new toy, and he was about to be taken away from her for the whole day. She bore up bravely through the fruit and the cereal, and well into the eggs, before she broke out:

"Do you realize, Bayard, that you are going to be gone all day at your hateful office?"

"I'm afraid so, my darling," he moaned in excellent spirits.

"But what's to become of me?"

Leila wailed the question as tragically as if it concerned her lifelong fate: she wailed it no less tragically for the fact that she was adding the words "all morning" to the question. She wanted to know what was to become of her all morning!

CHAPTER XII

IT was the bride's last breakfast and the housewife's first. That is, Leila was not really a housewife; only an apartment wife, with nearly everything done for her except the spending of her time. She had to spend her own time.

She had been spending her brand new husband's time for several weeks; but now he was going to desert her, abandon her on a desert island of leisure and have a good time at his office all by himself.

This breakfast was the funeral of the honeymoon, and Leila hung with graceful dejection over the coffee cup. It might have been a cup of hemlock, judging from the posture of her woe. But the he-brute, attracted by a portion of a headline, had regained his newspaper and was gulping it down with his coffee.

His egg-spoon hung, with its freight of ivory and gold, and chilled in front of his lips while he exclaimed upon President Huerta's failure to salute the United States flag.

What was Huerta to him or he to Huerta that he should be so far absorbed as to compel his wife to ask him twice if he wanted more coffee?

It was a pitiful awakening to poor Leila. She was being taught that she was not important enough to keep her husband's mind or his body close at home. He had said that she was all the world to him, and behold, she was only a part of it. He had said that he could think of nothing else and desired nothing else but her. Now he had her, and he was thinking of everything else.

IT was Daphne's fortune, or misfortune, to see a bridal couple just issuing from the Eastern Gate of Paradise to take up their life among thorns and thistles and eat bread in the sweat of the face.

Such scenes are not supposed to be witnessed by those who have not been initiated into wedlock. They are kept secret, to encourage the others—for whose sake divorce proceedings ought not to be exposed, since, like all casualty lists, they tend to discourage recruiting.

This vision set Daphne's heart on a new inquiry and brought her pretty little head whacking into many of the beams that uphold society as it is. This led her small feet in their still smaller shoes into many stumbling blocks. Her adventures with life constituted what you might call a Pilgrimette's Progress, through the busy years of nineteen-fourteen and nineteen-fifteen.

And perhaps the course of civilization on this globe was more influenced by the behavior of herself and numerous other young marriageable women in the same dilemma than by all the bloody blundering in the slaughter-houses of the European wars that resounded through the same two years.

Daphne and her lovers were like children lingering at their play in a garden while a cyclone rages just over the hill. But the cyclone was merely cataclysm and destruction, while Daphne and her lovers were solemnly playing with the destinies of unborn children, the family of to-morrow, the home of the future, the very principles of human love.

THIS breakfast table was the beginning of a new epoch for Daphne. She sat with her eyes tactfully absorbed

in nothing deeper than her egg-cup, but her whole soul was a-stare at what it was learning about life.

Her sympathies would ordinarily have been with her brother in any dispute between him and his wife. But this dispute was between Bayard and love. It was sacrilegious for him to go on reading *The Times* when his bride had so much more important things to discuss. He heard her discuss them as through a morning paper darkly, and he made the wrong answers, and finally he snatched out his watch, glared it in the face, gasped and attacked the last of his breakfast like a train-catcher at a lunch counter.

It was then that he heard Leila wail:

"What's to become of me—all morning?"

Bayard stared at her sharply, but spoke softly enough:

"Why, I don't know, honey. There ought to be plenty for you to do. The Lord knows there's enough for me at the office."

"All right," sighed Leila, "I'll be brave and worry through somehow—till noon—with my sweet new sister's help. But we'll come down and lunch with you and tear you from your faithful stenographers,"—she said this also jokingly—then. "About what time do you go out to luncheon, By?"

Bayard's answer was discouraging: "Sometimes at three o'clock, sometimes at noon, sometimes not at all. On three days a week, the heads of the firm always lunch at the downtown Delmonico's in a private room. This is one of the days."

"Good heavens! do people do that sort of thing in this country, too?" said Leila, who had been abroad. "And you'll leave me this whole livelong day? I can never exist so long without you."

It was hyperbole to an outside ear but plain statement of fact to her. It was precious to one half of Bayard's soul, but he was already half remerged from the world of love to the world of life, like a man just issuing from a telephone booth and still clinging to the receiver for a last word. He called back in answer to the hail from the distance:

"I'm terribly sorry, honey. But men must work, and so forth."



This breakfast was the funeral of the honeymoon, and Lila hung over it with graceful dejection. But the he-brute, at-sister-in-law could have wished. It was her fortune, or misfortune, to see a bridal couple just issuing sweat of the face. Such scenes are not supposed to be witnessed by those who



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

tracted by a portion of a headline, had regained his newspaper. Daphne felt as uncomfortable and untimely as even a from the Eastern Gate of Paradise to take up their life among thorns and thistles and eat bread in the have not been initiated into wedlock. They are kept secret—to encourage the others.

Leila detained him for a further distress:

"You'll leave me a whole day without any amusement? It isn't even a matinée day, except at the music halls and the movies. What can I do all day to kill time?"

Bayard's days were too few and too short for the work he saw before him. He saw everywhere work to be done, mountains to level, canals to dig, stars to pluck, inventions to invent, freight to haul, demands to supply. The world was to him a chaos of fascinating, compelling tasks. His chief dread of sickness and of death was the loafing that they implied.

It dazed him to encounter a soul affrighted at finding itself in the presence of a wealth of time. He could never get enough of it.

Also, he felt a shock at her hint that he was expected to provide her with amusement. He wanted to say:

"Really, my love, when I married you, I didn't know I was booking myself for continuous vaudeville."

But one does not say such things to wives at first. So he said:

"I'm terribly sorry, but I'm helpless. I've been away too long. The office needs me. And I've spent a lot of money, and I've got to go down and earn some more to buy pretty things for my beauty."

This brightened her in a way he had not expected, and a little too far beyond his hopes. Gloom left her face like a cloud whipped from before the sun. She dazzled him with her smile:

"Oh, I know! Daphne and I can go shopping."

Bayard's heart flopped. His knees almost gave way. He wondered what on earth more there was in the shops that she could want to buy. She had come to the wedding with her trousseau only partly completed, on account of their haste. But she had bought and bought in Europe. She had made deep inroads on his funds by her demands, and still deeper inroads by her silent appeal to his passion for buying things to please her.

And now that they had come back to New York with their old trunks bulging and new trunks bought abroad bulging,

and had paid a thumping sum to the custom house, now she was still eager to go shopping!

What he wanted to do was to quit buying for a while and sell something.

He did not say this. Love was slipping the bandage off one eye, but it had not yet removed the sugar stick that stops the tongue from criticism.

LEILA grew more cheerful at a terrifying rate:

"Go to your old luncheon, you dear child, and Daphne and your mother and I will go on a spree in the shops. Then we'll all have a banquet to-night and a theater; and if we're not too tired, a supper; and if you're very good I'll take you to one of those dancing places afterward. I'll buy the theater tickets myself. I want to save you as much trouble as I can, honey. So run along to your office and don't worry about us. But you must miss me terribly. Will you?"

He vowed that he would, and he meant it. She was a most missable creature.

He smiled across her shoulder at his mother and Daphne. Neither answered him with a smile. Mrs. Kip was indignant at Leila's nonsense. She had forgotten her own romance so completely that she believed she had never been nonsensical. She would have said that in her day young wives were never nonsensical.

Daphne did not smile, but for quite the opposite reason. She was understanding Leila and the ever-recurrent type she was. Daphne was imagining herself in Leila's slippers on the morning after her own honeymoon.

Leila graciously released Bayard only to call him back for his newspaper:

"Don't you want to read it?" he asked. "I can get another at the subway station."

She shook her head. "There's nothing in the papers to interest me. I'm just from Paris, and I know more about the fashions than they do."

Bayard shuddered a little inly. The times were epic. Immortal progress was being made as never before: ancient despotisms were turning into republics; republics were at war with one another;

constitutions, labor problems, life problems, all social institutions were being ripped up and remade, all the relations of masters and men, mistresses, children, wives, animals.

History was being carved in granite blocks, and nearly every day there was a monumental deed that would be a milestone on the road of time.

Only recently the United States had seized the port of Vera Cruz and landed troops with the loss of lives because the Mexican President would not salute the insulted flag. It was inconceivable then that a year later the Mexican president would be an exile, running his lawnmower on a Long Island lawn, peacefully basking under the flag he never did salute. It was inconceivable that the atrocities of savage Mexico would soon be forgotten in the barbarities of civilized Europe. Two years later perhaps there would be other exiles from Europe mowing lawns out at Long Island. For once, everybody was compelled to say, "These are great days we are living in."

And Leila said there was nothing in the papers! Epoch-making news meant to her a change in the fashion in sleeves, the shift of the equatorial waistline a trifle nearer the bust or a trifle nearer the hips, the release of the ankles from tight skirts. The great revolution in her world was the abrupt decision of the dressmakers that after years of costumes that clung more and more closely to the human outline, they would depart from it in every way possible. They would seek eccentric contours and masses of fabrics, beginning, however, below the shoulders and revealing to a startled and helpless world of men the hitherto forbidden realm of the armpit. As Tom Duane had said in his club:

"The women had taken every other exclusive privilege away from us except the razor—and now they're after that."

And indeed this which might be called the axillary revolution was the greatest revolution of the time to American women. Before many months the papers were actually carrying advertisements of exquisite razors for women!

The first impulse is to laugh or to storm, but after all, perhaps among the

fatuous futilities of male ambitions and conflicts, it was just as important to mankind that the armpits should be revealed as the secrets of the Steel Trust.

Bayard's horror was wasted. He should have realized that it is not given to one soul to be at the same time a beautiful, amorous young girl and a gray-bearded professor of mathematics.

If he had married the professor, he would have been perhaps even more disappointed than he was in Leila's irresponsiveness. He would not have found a divine exultation in holding the professor of mathematics on his lap, nor a superhuman thrill in debating the problem of who loves whom the mostest. On the other hand, there would be times when the professor of mathematics would entertain him mightily as a relief from too much sweets.

LOVE after all is a kind of summer sabbath in a man's workaday week. It was Monday morning to Bayard, and he was eager to get back to work. He was as thirsty for his office as a young man who has dipped into his sweetheart's box of chocolate creams is thirsty for a glass of ice water.

He hesitated, appealed again to his watch, gasped at the hour and the minutes, kissed Leila violently, kissed Daphne and kissed his mother and rushed for the door. Leila put out her arms again.

"I must be last," she cried, and as he bowed into her arms, she kissed his ear and whispered, "And first, too, and all the betweenes."

He nodded, and glanced again at his mother, who knew what was being said and tried in vain not to feel the knife that slid into her heart.

Bayard felt another knife in his, and whirling out of Leila's embrace, went out into the hall, stabbed the elevator bell with his thumb, and waited fuming.

The door opened with a kind of stealth, and Leila slipped out to take him in her arms again, and asked with as much uncertainty as if he had given no proof of his devotion:

"Are you sorry you married me?"

He wanted to cry out, "My God, what's the use of saying it again!" but

he answered her with an earnestness, whose petulance was all she received:

"Of course not; I have everything in the world I want. I'm the happiest man on earth. Good-by, sweet; here's the elevator."

"Good-by; come home early," she sighed, and retreated. She closed the door only enough to leave a crevice and to whisper through it a little wail like a doleful murmur from a grave:

"Good-by!"

BAYARD stepped into the elevator; it fell swiftly to earth. He ran for the subway kiosk, bounded down the steps as a train slid in, and cursed under his breath because a fumbling woman at the ticket window picked up her change deliberately. He shot a nickel under the wicket, snatched his ticket off the glass, flung it at the chopping box and plunged for the train as the door closed in front of him like a gentle sarcasm. He hated the stolid guard behind the door, and stalked the platform in wrath till the next train slid up.

Bayard had been a business man from his cradle days. He loved promptitude. He blushed to arrive late at his office and set a bad example to his stenographers and clerks. It was his creed that success comes to those who arrive earlier on the battlefield than the others, fight harder, and stay longer there, and end every day with the next day's maneuvers clearly realized as part of the next month's campaign.

There was need for concentration in his business, for he had brought back from Europe a sense of great disaster in the air, and there was little encouragement in American commerce except an instinctive feeling that the worst must be over because it had lasted so long.

CHAPTER XIII

LEILA'S heart sank with the elevator that took her lover to the depths. She closed the door and leaned against it, sorrowing. She wished to be alone, and have a good cry. In her mood, the griefs of love were as much a part of its luxuries as the joys. They were

black, but of a soft and velvet blackness.

It angered her that her lover's sister and mother should be waiting for her return with all their eyes. She was not ready for the scrutiny of strangers, and they were something worse than strangers.

But there was no escape for her, and she went back to her ordeal with as much bravery as she could. She tried by praising Bayard to appease the mother and sister for her theft of the heart of their man.

"Can you ever forgive me for marrying your wonderful son?" she said to Mrs. Kip, "and your wonderful brother?"—to Daphne.

"Why—why—" was all that Mrs. Kip could mumble.

"I haven't taken him from you, of course," she said. "He loves you both with all his heart. I'm just an old outsider. Will you forgive me?"

When people rob us of our things, it is not half so painful if they will admit that the things they have taken are ours. Mrs. Kip was touched by Leila's apology and took the girl into her arms; and Daphne squeezed her hand, saying:

"We're as proud of you as Punch. Bayard couldn't have chosen better for all the world."

Leila was in need of such support. She brightened as she turned to Daphne. "And my little new sister is going to get married too! Oh, I hope you'll be happier than happy. And of course you will be. I know Clay pretty well. He's an awfully nice boy. Of course there's only one Bayard, but—I'm sure you'll be happy."

Daphne smiled:

"I'm sure I shall." But her heart was not sure: her heart was wondering.

Curiously, her first dread of unhappiness had come from watching a pair of lovers on that summit of bliss, where the young bridegroom first leaves the warm arms of his bride to charge forth into the lists with lance couched and her favors on his sleeve.

Daphne's next grief came from the rapturous vision of Leila's trousseau. Leila's maid arrived now and was set to unpacking the trunks. She added her squeals to the choruses of rapture.

Leila's father and mother had given her what money they could spare, and more, to spend on her equipment abroad. Bayard had contributed further. The result was a gorgeous heap of booty: when Daphne and her mother had wrung their hands and exhausted their adjectives over the last stitch of the innermost lingerie, Leila said:

"Well, what do you think of it?"

Daphne amazed her by saying: "It makes me want to commit suicide—that's all."

"Why? For heaven's sake, why?"

"Because your clothes will make mine look so old fashioned and ugly. We were going to dazzle Cleveland with the latest word from New York. But we can't afford what we've seen, and now you've shown us that what we've seen isn't the latest."

"Oh, you mustn't let anything discourage you. Getting a trousseau is one of the worst horrors of marriage. The poor peasant girls begin their trousseaux when they are children."

"Mother and I started a list," Daphne groaned, "but it got so long we gave it up and I don't know how much we're in for."

"Let me help you!" Leila cried.

CLOSE to the joy of matchmaking in a woman's heart lies the ecstasy of selecting a bride's wardrobe or a forthcoming baby's layette.

So the three women, bride-elect, bride-to-be, and bride-of-long-ago, put their heads together in council.

"Now let me see. What have you just got to have?" said Leila. "Wait till I get some paper. First, of course, is the wedding gown."

"The whole thing is mapped out in this article in *Vogue*," said Mrs. Kip. "Read it, Daphne, and Leila can jot down the items and what they'll cost."

"It begins encouragingly, anyway," said Daphne, and she read the subtitle: "To buy enough, yet not too much; to resist the wiles of couturière and modiste, and yet to provide clothes for every possible emergency, is the difficult problem of the bride."

She read on skimmingly:

"It is a common fault of brides to

buy too much. Naturally, a bride is supposed to be completely fitted out and no allowance is made for any omissions. For her who is to marry in May or June, the problem is far simpler than for one who plans an October or November wedding. It is assumed that the bride will have already purchased her spring clothes and will have on hand a suit or two, a one-piece frock of serge or similar material, a top coat, an afternoon coat or one of the new capes, evening gowns and an evening wrap, one or two afternoon or luncheon frocks, and hats, shoes, and similar accessories that are still in good condition."

Daphne lowered the magazine and sighed:

"That's the worst of it. I haven't a thing that's fit to wear. I waited to get my summer things in New York, and I'm coming here to live, and what Cleveland things I have won't do. Oh, dear! poor Dad!"

Mrs. Kip was less pitiful. "He wouldn't buy you half you needed last winter, so he'll have to make up for it now. Go on and read."

A war-cabinet figuring out the necessary military appropriations for a big campaign could not have been more anxious, or felt more sure that any omission was dangerous. A war-cabinet could not have felt more justified in incurring future burdens for present necessities.

Daphne read, and Leila wrote down the catalogue, beginning at "morning-wear" and ending at "night-wear," with all the wears between.

Daphne had never attempted a complete outfit before, and she was appalled at the number of things a woman of quality requires for her investiture.

After the all-important wedding gown had been debated, and the going-away gown and the gowns of all occasions, there remained the parasols and hats and gloves, and shoes and slippers and stockings.

Once the outer integuments were chosen with some thought of splendor or refinement, it would be odious hypocrisy and the worst of domestic management to have the inner petals cheap or



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

The two girls in their differing yet rivaling charms faced each other as a dried and a nymph might have met. They
But perfect happiness is said to need a bit of horror to make it complete. The happiness of the two girls



were proud to be themselves and proud to be kinfolk. Dutilh fluttered from one to the other, almost as happy as either, did not lack that element. The price of their glory furnished it. They asked the cost with anxiousness.

plain. And Daphne, noting with dismay how long already was the list that Leila made, read with sinking heart the next to the last paragraph concerning things which were once "unmentionables," but which the advertising pages of the magazines and newspapers have made familiar with the utmost candor:

"As regards the amount of underwear which should be included in the trousseau, opinions differ greatly. Even the simplest of trousseaux, however, will require at least three corsets, one for sports and morning wear—even two if possible—and two for afternoon and evening use. If changed frequently, corsets keep their shape and wear for a much longer period. There should be at least eight nightgowns, six chemises or six combinations, or twelve pairs of drawers and six corset covers if one prefers them to combinations. Of petticoats there will be needed from four to six very simple models, possibly only buttonholed at the edge, for morning wear and sports; two embroidered petticoats, one a bit more decorative for afternoon use; two of lace and embroidery—or one may be of chiffon, or net and lace, for fine white frocks; and at least two evening skirts of chiffon. Many girls who dance a great deal buy the very simple, untrimmed, plaited chiffon skirts, usually flesh pink, to wear under frocks which have an underskirt or are not transparent."

There was a dismal pause while Leila wrote down these things and set opposite each of them her estimate of what the price should be. There were debates and compromises at every point, but at length the schedule was done.

The worst of it was that in spite of the ominous bulk, the prices were all of them moderate. They were better than poor; the things they bought would be nice, very nice; but there would be nothing glorious about them. The truly rich would inevitably call them mediocre. It is odious to ruin oneself for a tawdry ostentation.

And this was the list. As Leila read it aloud, her careless soul rejoiced at its completeness and the vision of its amalgamated beauty—while Mrs. Kip and Daphne passed from anxiety, via horror,

to absolute collapse. But this was the list—a diplomatic White Book of great historical value, a typical document in a typical love-story of the spring of 1914—far more absorbing to those interested than any love-letter ever written:

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Bridal gown | \$225.00 |
| Bridal veil | 50.00 |
| Bridal slippers | 10.00 |

GOWNS AND SUITS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Going-away gown | \$125.00 |
| Hat and shoes for same | 50.00 |
| 1 blue gabardine suit | 145.00 |
| 3 morning dresses | 75.00 |
| 1 evening gown | 185.00 |
| 1 evening gown | 125.00 |
| 2 formal lingerie gowns: | |
| 1 at | 85.00 |
| 1 at | 75.00 |
| 1 afternoon gown of charmeuse | 125.00 |
| 1 dinner gown | 185.00 |
| 1 sports suit | 45.00 |
| 2 white corduroy skirts | 10.00 |
| 2 white piqué skirts | 10.00 |
| 2 white linen | 12.00 |

WAISTS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 2 white silk wash blouses | \$12.00 |
| 2 white crêpe wash blouses | 12.00 |
| 2 white handkerchief, linen | 10.00 |
| 1 white chiffon blouse | 14.00 |
| 1 pink chiffon blouse | 22.00 |

HATS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1 leghorn garden hat | \$45.00 |
| 1 afternoon hat (large) | 50.00 |
| 1 afternoon hat (small) | 40.00 |
| 1 sports hat | 14.00 |
| 1 morning hat | 25.00 |

SHOES

| | |
|---|---------|
| 3 pairs satin evening slippers | \$24.00 |
| 1 pair walking boots | 7.00 |
| 1 pair patent leather slippers | 10.00 |
| 1 pair white buckskin shoes | 15.00 |
| 1 pair tan ties | 8.00 |
| 1 pair dress shoes | 14.00 |
| 1 pair satin mules | 8.00 |
| 1 pair traveling folding slippers | 3.00 |
| 1 pair tennis shoes | 6.00 |

COATS AND WRAPS

| | |
|--|---------|
| 1 silk sweater | \$29.00 |
| 1 white corduroy coat | 15.00 |
| 1 evening coat, taffeta | 150.00 |
| 1 heavy motor or traveling cloak | 90.00 |
| 1 lace evening scarf | 30.00 |
| 1 chiffon evening scarf | 12.00 |

PARASOLS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1 dark green silk | \$12.00 |
| 1 rose and ivory | 16.00 |
| 1 white painted chiffon | 30.00 |

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Veils | \$25.00 |
|-------------|---------|

GLOVES

| | |
|--|---------|
| 6 pairs glacé evening gloves | \$24.00 |
| 4 pairs chamois gloves | 8.00 |
| 6 pairs short white glacé gloves | 12.00 |
| 4 pairs colored suede gloves | 8.00 |

LINGERIE

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| 3 corsets | \$72.00 |
| 3 chiffon evening petticoats | 18.00 |

CHAPTER XIV

| | |
|--|---------|
| 2 crêpe petticoats | \$14.00 |
| 1 taffeta petticoat | 12.00 |
| 4 white wash petticoats | 28.00 |
| 1 fine lingerie petticoat | 26.00 |
| 3 princess slips for lingerie gowns | 21.00 |
| 1 satin morning petticoat | 12.00 |
| 4 night gowns | 48.00 |
| 2 night gowns | 12.00 |
| 6 silk skirts | 36.00 |
| 6 pair black silk stockings | 12.00 |
| 2 pair fine silk stockings | 12.00 |
| 6 pair white silk stockings | 12.00 |
| 6 pair assorted colors silk stockings | 16.00 |
| 6 crêpe combinations | 56.00 |
| 3 muslin hand-embroidered combinations | 42.00 |
| 1 chiffon tea gown | 60.00 |
| 1 crêpe negligee | 18.00 |
| 1 crêpe negligee | 12.00 |
| 1 chiffon breakfast jacket | 24.00 |
| 3 chiffon and lace boudoir caps | 17.00 |
| 3 crêpe boudoir caps | 9.00 |
| 3 dozen handkerchiefs with initial | 21.00 |

THERE was a long silence after the death-warrant was ended.

If it had been a suddenly revealed list of Clay Wimburn's secret crimes, Daphne could not have felt it more dramatic. For money matters are the continuous drama of our lives. They thrill us to our noblest and basest souls and test them crucially.

Mrs. Kip had lived long enough to be prepared for anything atrocious, and disappointment was her daily bread. She had a positive appetite for it. She asked hungrily:

"What does it total up?"

Totaling it up was a task that overwhelmed all three. Leila added the columns up and down and totaled the totals. The totals up were not at all akin to the totals down. The multiplications and additions did not prove. Daphne tried her hand with several new results, all discrepant with Leila's bookkeeping and her own. Mrs. Kip declined to attempt such a mountain of figures.

But while the results varied picturesquely in details, they agreed that the amount required for this modest equipment was something a little under or a little over three thousand dollars.

"Three thousand dollars!" Daphne cried. "It might as well be three million. That finishes it. I'll be married in my mackintosh and a pair of rubber boots."

EVEN Mrs. Kip admitted that the whole array was far beyond the reach of her husband's means. Still, she insisted that he could provide a partial trousseau, at least. He could because he must. She herself would "go without things" for ten years if necessary.

Daphne, however, was haunted by the vision of her father's harrowed, money-hungry face. When her mother reminded her that it was his last chance to do anything for her, she retorted: "Yes, and it's my last chance to do anything for him."

In her impatience she attacked the wedding gown itself:

"Why have a wedding gown at all? And that veil business: I'm no shy young flower not ready to be seen! Everybody has seen me. And why must we have the wedding in a church? Why give a reception? It's only to show off before a lot of people in a town I'm going to move away from. And if I were going to stay there, what difference would it make? They all know me. And they'd all know that I bankrupted poor Dad and robbed Mamma of money that would have bought her luxuries for years—and all for what? To walk down a church aisle and have everybody say 'Ooh!' And they wouldn't say it."

Mrs. Kip stared aghast at this assault on sacred institutions. It was almost atheism. Leila tried to quiet the young infidel:

"It's not that dear," said Leila. "But you've got to have some new things. You can't march into your husband's life with no equipment. You can't expect him to fit you out."

Daphne remembered Clay's financial cramps, and realized that if she wanted any clothes she would better take them from her father. Clay had made her walk down Riverside Drive, because he was out of funds; how could she count on his filling her wardrobe?

Her pride was wrung by her plight. She must either go shabby or cause acute distress to one or both of the men that were dearest of all in the world to her. She must leave behind her a burden of debt as a farewell tribute to her father,



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

Pulling her engagement ring from her finger, Daphne placed it in his hand. "Wha—what's this, Daphne?"
he stuttered.

or she must bring with her a burden of debt as her *dot*.

"No!" she averred with a sudden impatient cutting of the Gordian snarl. "Clay will have to take me just as I am or take back this diamond ring he wished on me."

Her defiance was not convincing. Her mother protested:

"It's not Clay that you have to consider. He'll never know what you have on. It's the guests at the wedding—and your old friends and the neighbors. You don't want them to think we're poor and that your father is marrying you off cheap, do you?"

"It seems mighty foolish to go and make yourself really poor in order to keep from seeming poor, especially when you never fool anybody except yourself."

Leila with the magnanimity of a native spendthrift tried to soothe the fever of the rebel:

"I know just how you feel, my dear. I've often felt that way myself. But then I realized that it's a girl's business to look well, and she can't succeed without help. The men would rather work a little harder and have us handsome than loaf and have us dowdy. And if we didn't spend the money on clothes, they'd spend it on more foolish things, like speculations. My father has lost thousands of dollars on investments that might just as well have been spent on my clothes." She was a philosopher of a sort, Leila.

Mrs. Kip agreed with her heartily. Among her bitterest grievances against her husband were the sums he had lost in stocks and bonds, in indorsing notes for friends and in trying to increase his income by the usual methods of financial agriculture. She would have given Leila her unbounded approval if it had not been her own son who was to support the pretty theory that money is made to buy things with.

Leila pressed her success: "Anyway, it won't do any harm to look about a little. If you can't have the whole troussseau, you can have two or three extra nice things. You might pick up a wonderful bargain. Let's go prowling around, anyway. I may see something I

want myself. Bayard dragged me away from Paris before I had finished shopping. There are several things I need desperately."

Daphne glanced at the little mountains of clothes heaped up about the apartment and understood what Bayard had felt. Still, Daphne was very woman, and she is no woman who can resist the *Wanderlust* of exploring the bazaars. But she resolved loftily that she would not buy.

THE three wise women set forth: they joined the petticoated army pouring from all the homes like a *levée en masse*, a foray of pretty Huns.

They meant hardly more than to observe and investigate. But the first shop they stopped at roused in them a frenzy to possess. Daphne was beautiful and loved beauty. She revered the correct and the new.

It humiliated her to realize that the dressmaker's models were looking at her street-suit and saying to themselves that it was built on yesterday's pattern. The edict had just gone forth from the high places that the "slim, straight silhouette" was no longer right. It would soon be indecent to go about in skirts and waists that followed the body and clung to it. There was a kind of pauper's nakedness in it. It would bring discredit on the fathers and brothers and husbands of the shameless creatures whose costumes did not flare.

The same shame is felt among men for other sorts of unfashionableness. It fills with remorse the scientist who finds that he has been wearing in public an hypothesis that was referred to last week in *Science* as an exploded theory; the American author who finds that an English book reviewer has derided one of his expressions as an Americanism; the doctor, the parson, the business man, the painter, musician, all or any who are caught abroad in the daylight in ideas that are just out of style.

Leila conducted her little troop finally to the famous dress-laboratory in which Lady Powell-Beauclerc (spoken "Pole-Buckler") experimented in whimsies. Leila had once had the distinction of

Clem's Widow

SHE believed in Colonel Elmer Poundstone, of Piñon, and it devolved upon Chuckwalla Bill, Doc Bleeker and Ballarat Bob, the gambler, to dispose of the Colonel's case.

By Peter B. Kyne

Author of "The Committee on Credentials," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE PORTER HOSKINS

THE night before, Chuckwalla Bill and I had hobbled our burros and camped on a mesa in the Toquimas just above the deserted and fast decaying mining camp of Piñon. As he faced me across the campfire, he had told me a remarkable story of life in Piñon in the old days: of how Clem Hardy's plucky little wife had aided him to make a fortune from his claim; of how Clem, unable to bear prosperity, took to loafing and gambling away this fortune; of how Ballarat Bob, out of sympathy for Mrs. Hardy, won all of Clem's money from him and secretly restored it to Mrs. Hardy; and of how Clem had sought to assassinate Ballarat and had been killed by Ballarat's case-keeper. And now as we entered the ruined town, a remark which the old prospector had made the previous night, recurred to me with a new significance: "There aint nothin' lonelier than the place where man has lived an' loved an' died an' gone away from."

Instinctively, upon entering Piñon, one felt the truth of this desert philosophy. Even I, who had never known the camp in the brave old days, seemed to sense the touch of vanished hands, to catch fleeting glimpses of wraiths of the past; a poignant sense of the fallibility and mortality of man oppressed me. Chuckwalla Bill, too, seemed awed and sobered, as he paused before a long, low frame building with a high false front, meditatively bit a neat crescent out of his plug of chewing-tobacco and pointed to a sign, now almost indecipherable,

extending across the face of the building:

ANY MAN, ANY GAME

"That there used to be Ballarat Bob's hang-out—him as I was tellin' you about last night, that me an' Doc Bleeker helps to strip a human vacuum by the name o' Clem Hardy of all his worldly goods an' gear, after we've all made up our minds Clem aint to be trusted with 'em, an' that his wife ought to be made his guardeen."

We left the jacks in the middle of Main Street and entered Ballarat Bob's late hang-out. Chuckwalla tossed his hat on the warped and cracked bar, against which he leaned his back and gazed across the room. "Right over yonder, Ballarat had his faro table," he said; "there's the dais where the look-out used to set, an' right here where I'm standin', an' in about this position, was where Clem Hardy stood, when he decides to provide an unexpected climax to our little adventure in philanthropy, by usin' Ballarat for a target, an' clean overlookin' the case-keeper, who, as I told you last night, unlimbers an' wafts Clem into the Happy Huntin' Grounds."

Chuckwalla sighed and shook his head, half turning to glance into the cracked mirror behind the bar, as if he half expected some spook barkeeper to voice the ancient formula: "What'll be yore pleasure, Chuckwalla?"

"But what happened to Clem's wife, Chuckwalla?" I demanded. "You said you'd tell it to me some time."



I find her all dressed up for goin' away "That Cinnabar stock o' yourn," I says. "It's slumped" "Uncle Billy," she says, "you just shet up. You know very well I wouldn't tell anybody if I lost every cent I invested."

WELL, (said Chuckwalla, who had climbed up on the bar and made himself comfortable), you'd think as how one adventure would have cured me an' Doc Bleeker an' Ballarat Bob, when, for all our good intentions, we culminates the deal in a funeral an' a broken heart. But no! Before Clem Hardy is fairly underground, his widdler has writ' a note to all three of us, declarin' as how she realizes the circumstances perfectly an' don't hold us accountable nohow for her widdlerhood; which epistle causes us to arch our necks an' tails an' begin to speculate on how we can best serve Mrs. Hardy for absolvin' us.

Well, sir, it aint a month after the lady's quit wearin' widdler's weeds till me an' Ballarat Bob an' Doc Bleeker has it brought to our attention as how her bank-roll, for which we're responsible, is threatened by a man that's lower'n a snake—an' a snake crawls on his belly. Consequently us three, settin' as a committee on credentials, files our horns an' gores this low-down cuss, which in makin' the statement that Colonel Elmer Poundstone is the most wuthless man I ever meet up with, I don't omit dance-hall entertainers, bar-room moochers an' white men that hive up in campoodies with Injuns.

Nobody knows where the Colonel hails from. He just drifts into camp with the rest of the people an' hangs out his shingle as a counsel-at-law. On the side he's app'inted District Recorder, an' the Governor hands him out a commission as notary public, an' by an' large he's doin' well when us three have our attention called to his activities.

"Which this Colonel Poundstone is the glass of fashion an' the mold o' form," says Doc. "The only thing I got against him is the fact that he says he's a Southern gentleman. I'm from south o' Mason and Dixon's line myself, an' when I was a young feller, Southern gentlemen didn't have to announce the fact that they was gentlemen. By livin' up to the code, they allowed as how folks would take it for granted."

"Doc," I says, "has it occurred to you that the Colonel is payin' court to Mrs. Hardy?"

"It has," replies Doc. "She's the prettiest, the best eddicated an' the wealthiest woman in camp, an' on the face o' things, the Colonel, bein' the most elegant an' accomplished gentleman hereabouts, it stands to reason they see somethin' in each other—"

"I know what that Poundstone man sees," says Ballarat thoughtfully. "He sees a fortune me an' Chuckwalla labored to produce." And he takes to shufflin' a stack o' chips with one hand an' whistlin' "The Suwanee River" sorter sad an' low. Finally he looked up at me an' Doc. "Gentlemen," he says, "I knew a hotel clerk down in San Francisco once that could tell a hotel beat the minute the feller reached for the pen in the potato. I'm blessed with some of them divinatory powers myself. I'm gambler enough to know a tin-horn, short-card, no-good skunk when I see one, an' that description fits the Colonel like a tailor-made suit. Chuckwalla, I'd most certainly grieve to see yore nephew beaten out o' his schoolin' that his ma's been savin' her money for."

I know what he's drivin' at. Mrs. Hardy's kid always called me "Uncle." Ballarat realizes I'm the family friend an' adviser, an' on account o' my position thataway I'm privileged to do some straight talkin' to Mrs. Hardy if the occasion ever arises.

"I'll remember that, Ballarat," I says, an' that ended our conversation, as the Doc would say, for the nonce.

It's mebbe a year after Clem Hardy's removal when one day Doc Bleeker comes lopin' into Ballarat Bob's in the shank o' the late afternoon. Ballarat's place is deserted, an' me an' him playin' crib for the drinks, when Doc busts in on us like a cyclone.

"Gentlemen," he says, "the market on Cinnabar Consolidated has gone to glory. She's dropped two points—an' me spraddlin' the market on the local exchange, playin' for a sharp rise."

"Sho," says Ballarat, "whoever in Piñon has been holdin' enough Cinnabar Consolidated to dump it overboard an' break the price two points?"

"Colonel Elmer Poundstone," says Doc.

Ballarat Bob shakes his head. "Come

again, Doc," he says. "The Colonel can prove an alibi. He aint got any Cinnabar Con. If he did, he'd have advertised the fact that he was holdin' a block of it. He can't keep his mouth shut about anything that'll give folks an idee he's rich an' prosperous."

"Wa-ll," says Doc, "mebbe he's handlin' it for a client—"

"Look here, Doc," I says, "how'd you find this out?"

"Why, I'm in my broker's office, discussin' the break, when Poundstone come in an' I hear him askin' the bookkeeper if the check for his Cinnabar Con. stock was ready yet. That's how I know."

Doc's always tinkerin' with stocks. He's mebbe carryin' five hundred shares of Cinnabar Con. at ten cents a share, an' the break in the market has cost him ten dollars in paper profits, but it might just as well have been a million, becuz the Doc takes on just as hard, a-cussin' Poundstone for a fool an' a knave for sellin' now. I leave him an' Ballarat discussin' the market, while I cross over to the hotel to see Mrs. Hardy, for I been doin' a little tall thinkin'. There's been fifty thousand shares of Cinnabar Con. sold on the Piñon exchange, an' in a camp like that pretty nearly everybody knows what stocks the other feller is holdin'. Mrs. Hardy is holdin' a hundred thousand shares of Cinnabar Consolidated. I'd got a straight tip, and on my say-so, she invests ten thousand dollars—one hundred thousand shares at ten cents. It's in ten certificates of ten thousand each, endorsed in blank by the former owner, and I don't take the trouble to have these certificates transferred to her name on the books of the company. I'm careless thataway in business matters.

Wa-ll, son, I think of these things now, and I'm worried. None knows better'n me the court the Colonel's been payin' to Mrs. Hardy, an' I happen to know he's done a little legal business for her. I can't get the notion out o' my head that he's induced her to sell her Cinnabar stock, an' if that's so, I'm feelin' a little hurt an' out in the cold.

I find her on the porch of the Hotel Metropole, all dressed up for goin' away.

"Uncle Billy," she says, "I'm so glad

you've come. I'm goin' down to San Francisco for a few weeks, an' I've been lookin' for you, to ask you to keep your eye on my claim until I get back."

"An' I been lookin' for you," I says. "About that Cinnabar stock o' yours: You didn't never tell anybody I advised you to buy that stock, did you, Mrs. Hardy?"

"Why, no," she says. "What makes you ask?"

"Wa-ll," I says, "it's slumped a mite, an' some o' the boys that knows I'm holdin' a little of it have been twittin' me about my judgment. If she drops lower an' they found out I've roped you in on a loss—"

"Uncle Billy," she says, "you just shet up. You know very well I wouldn't tell anybody if I lost every cent I invested."

"That's comfortin'," I says. "You aint a-goin' to lose. Some of these fly brokers is puttin' over wash-sales, tryin' to depress the stock, so I thought I'd warn you not to worry. I think she'll drag a little an' then go sky high, so mebbe you'd better leave them ten certificates with me while you're away. If the market takes a sudden turn, I think we'd better unload an' take our profit."

"Why, my attorney, Colonel Poundstone, has the certificates," she says. "I was talkin' with him the other day about ownin' the stock, an' he said he'd heard there was a fight on for control of Cinnabar Consolidated, an' he wouldn't be surprised if I'd be approached by one side or the other for my proxy or a proposition to sell at a nice profit. I told him the stock had never been transferred to my name, and it was not likely anybody would approach me, so at his suggestion I gave him the certificates. He said he was going over to Cinnabar shortly, an' he'll attend to the transfer."

"Which the same is a rattlin' good idea, Mrs. Hardy," I says, "an' I'm glad the Colonel advised you right. Have a good time while you're away, an' don't worry about the clean-up." I shake hands an' kiss the baby good-by an' go streakin' back to Ballarat Bob's, where I relate all the information I gather.

"She give him ten certificates, all endorsed in blank by the original owner," says Doc Bleeker, "an' yesterday after-

noon five ten-thousand-share blocks is sold on the local exchange at eight cents by Colonel Poundstone. Ballarat, do you smell a rodent?"

"I shore do," says Ballarat, "an' the only way to get the evidence is for you to go up to yore broker, Doc, an' buy that whole fifty thousand shares. If he aint disposed of 'em elsewhere, his client mebbe entertains an offer to turn a quick profit. Offer him ten cents, an' me an' Chuckwalla will produce the money. Ask him for the same shares he buys on the exchange yesterday, becuz you want certain interested parties to lose track of who's holdin' it. Savvy?"

DOC is off like a streak. In fifteen minutes he's back for the check, an' shortly thereafter he strolls in an' lays on Ballarat's faro table five of Mrs. Clem Hardy's certificates. It's all the evidence we want, and there aint no doubt but what the Colonel has committed a breach of trust an' pocketed four thousand dollars of Mrs. Hardy's money. I'm for huntin' for him with a gun an' makin' him disgorge, but Ballarat Bob is ag'in' that course.

"He wont run away," says Ballarat, "so we have time to consider what's to be done. He wont leave Piñon until he's unloaded the remainin' fifty thousand shares, an' with Mrs. Hardy leavin' camp for three weeks he'll figger his secret will be safe until she gets back an' mebbe demands the stock. Three weeks is ample time to trim that felon, an' I'm a-goin' to trim him good an' plenty. Yes, sir, gentlemen, that lamb is shore in for a shearin'."

"How?" says Doc Bleeker.

Ballarat reaches into his drawer an' pulls out a pink check on the First National Bank o' Cinnabar.

"That's the Colonel's check," he says. "It's for fifty dollars he loses in the Rat Trap a few days ago, an' then stops payment on, claimin' the faro dealer run a sandy on him. The feller that runs the game was tellin' me about it, an' I happen to know he's runnin' a straight game; I happen to know, also, that the Colonel is the best faro player that ever took a nick out of my bank-roll, an' when my worthy competitor tells me this fifty

is the first money he's won from the Colonel since he settled in our midst, I can well believe him. He's frothin' at the mouth to think the Colonel's stopped payment on the check." An' Ballarat Bob gives a gentle little chuckle as if he has a little secret he wont tell nobody.

"How'd that piece o' wuthless paper come into yore possession, Ballarat?" says the Doc.

"Oh, I give twenty-five dollars for it," says Ballarat. "I got a notion I'll collect it one o' these days, an' it's worth fifty dollars. Why shouldn't I do a little tradin' an' make twenty-five dollars?"

"Which you're talkin' in riddles, Ballarat," I says. "Spread yore hand an' let me an' the Doc have a look."

"When a man like the Colonel stops payment on a check he issues for his losses in a square gamblin' game," says Ballarat, "it's becuz he's a natural born crook. Still, crook that he is, the Colonel wouldn't do a raw job like that if he expected to remain in Piñon. He was fixin' to sell Mrs. Hardy's stock and vamoose, but now that she's goin' away I'm bankin' he'll linger in our midst a little longer'n he intended, an' while lingerin' he'll patronize the only other faro dealer in Piñon that's known to be above suspicion. If he can win some money, fine and dandy. If he loses, he'll give a check an' stop payment. Therefore when he comes patronizin' me, I'm goin' to run a sandy on him an' give him all the credit he wants. There's one thing I've noticed about the Colonel that makes him my prey. *He'll always play through a deal!*"

"But when he comes to settle up with you, he'll issue one o' them checks," says the Doc, a heap scornful.

"An' then he'll stop payment on it," I says.

"Right. Take the head of the class. But I'll collect the check," says Ballarat. "Now, you two *hombres* pay close attention to me while I give my instructions. I reckon I've got about as sensitive a pair of fingers as any gent in my profession, an' in my youth I learned how to deal from a brace deck, just as a matter of precaution an' never for profit. My case-keeper here is a past master in keepin' crooked cases, although he'd just



Ballarat takes out the two checks, tears 'em into pieces an' throws the fragments in the Colonel's burnin' face. "Git!" he roars, "an' if you ever show up in my gamblin' house again, I'll kill you most awful dead."

as soon keep 'em straight when he's workin' for an honest house. However, I've been out o' practice for a number of years, so to-night I'm goin' to be sick an' close down this faro game. But over in my room at the hotel I got an extra faro layout, an' I want you two gents to report there in secret to-night for rehearsals."

"We'll be there at ten o'clock," says the Doc.

"Very well," says Ballarat. "An' in the meantime, me an' my case-keeper'll prepare a trained deck."

Wa-ll, son, from ten o'clock that night until sun-up, Ballarat Bob an' his case-keeper do a mythical business with me an' the Doc. Ballarat's a little clumsy at first, but the case-keeper keeps wisin' him up, an' me an' Doc does our best to beat the game. In spite of us, however, Ballarat beats us out of thousands of dollars in stage money, an' along towards mornin' his work is almost perfect. However, he says he's got to have a little more practice, so he's still sick that day, an' the follerin' night we get together in his room for another session. This time we're not allowed to be in on the crooked play at all, an' as a result, although me an' Doc watches Ballarat an' the case-keeper like two cats, we don't detect the dirty work once, an' Ballarat wins from us as often as he pleases.

Ballarat an' his case-keeper sleeps all next day, but come evening they appear in the usual place at the gamblin' hall an' open for business. Ballarat 'lows to inquire friends that they've et somethin' that disagreed with 'em.

JUST before supper me an' Doc drops in an' starts playin'. We aint hardly started till the Colonel slips in, smilin' an' affable, an' buys a stack. He plays about an hour with us, an' wins sixty dollars, with Ballarat dealin' from an honest deck. Then the Colonel says:

"Wa-ll, Ballarat Bob, I guess we'll settle up. I'm goin' to supper."

"You mean I'll settle up, Colonel," says Ballarat, pretendin' he's some put out at losin' again, an' the Colonel enjoys this disgust a heap. Then him an' me an' the Doc has a slight libation at the bar, an' the Doc invites us both to

dine with him at the Hotel Metropole.

We don't play no more faro that night, but along in the late afternoon next day we all meet up at Ballarat's table again. Ballarat is waitin' for us this time with the trained deck. He graciously permits me to grab off about three hundred dollars, an' the Doc collects nineteen hundred, while Colonel Poundstone is robbed of two hundred even by seven o'clock, when I declare a recess for supper.

"Time for us to settle up, Colonel," says Ballarat.

"You mean it's time for me to settle up," says the Colonel pleasantly. "Wa-ll, Ballarat, I wont feel so bad about it as you did yesterday." An' he laughs an' writes a check. Ballarat stuffs it into his drawer, an' the Colonel an' Doc Bleeker an' me go off to supper. The Doc is some jubilant over his winnin' an' insists on payin' for the dinner again. He buys champagne, an' we all get more or less lit up, until about nine o'clock Doc proposes that we go back an' take some more skin off Ballarat Bob. The Colonel is agreeable, an' back we go.

Ballarat Bob looks up as the three of us comes prancin' in.

"Back for more, eh?" he says good natured. He unlocks his cash drawer, removes a new deck still sealed with the revenue stamp, unwraps it, shuffles it an' passes it across to Doc Bleeker to cut. Then he shoves it into the little silver case.

"I'll have forty browns," says Doc Bleeker, callin' for exactly the amount the Colonel had lost before supper, forty browns bein' worth two hundred dollars, or five dollars each. The Doc is a sharp on what he calls psychology—which as near as I can make out means the implantin' of your idee in the other feller's brain. At any rate, the Colonel says he'll take the same, an' so do I. Ballarat passes out the celluloids, an' me an' Doc pays for ours in coin, seein' which the Colonel says:

"I'll have to give you my check, Ballarat, although I see you got a sign up on the wall: 'No checks taken—or cashed.'"

"Oh, that's for people we don't know, Colonel," says Ballarat. "You can settle

when you quit playin'." An' he lays out two brown markers as a memorandum. The Colonel acknowledges his appreciation in some flowery language, an' the play commences. Durin' the first deal Ballarat leaves his fortunes, as Doc Bleeker would say, to the whim o' the goddess o' chance, dealin' from a straight deck, an' after the last turn Colonel Elmer Poundstone has before him some three hundred an' fifty dollars. While shufflin' for the next deal, however, I claim the Colonel's attention with a story I've heard that afternoon, an' Ballarat drops his hand below the table an' trades the honest deck for the crooked one which he has concealed under his left leg. It's done like that!

Of course, the Colonel loses from the first turn, while me an' Doc Bleeker, playin' on Ballarat's money an' bein' the come-ons, are free of his attentions. The way it falls out we actually win a little money by sheer luck, an' once in a while Ballarat lets us win a big pot.

Of course, our luck only tantalizes the Colonel, an' between the wine he's drunk an' Ballarat's gentle sarcasm, he declines to quit when his first forty browns has gone into Ballarat Bob's chip-rack. He buys forty more, an' by the time the deal is finished there's eight markers in the little pile at the right o' the dealer, an' the Colonel is eight hundred dollars in debt to Ballarat Bob, which losses, added to the two-hundred-dollar check he's given Ballarat before supper, totals a thousand dollars.

NOW, this is the ticklish point in the program. The Colonel figgers that if he quits now he'll have to give Ballarat a check for eight hundred more, an' he quits the evenin's entertainment loser a thousand dollars unless he stops payment on the checks—and a thousand dollars is a loss he aint willin' to stand. On the other hand, if he stops payment on a thousand dollars' worth of checks, something tells him he'll have to argue the issue with Ballarat in the smoke, an' the Colonel aint got more'n enough animal courage to spank a baby. Fifty dollars is the limit of the checks he welshes on previously, an' in both cases (we learn he's tried it twict) he contrives to start

an argument an' claim foul play. However, he knows he aint got no chance o' makin' any such claim as that stick in Piñon with reference to Ballarat Bob, who's universally loved an' respected. Besides, with Doc Bleeker an' me in the same game an' winnin', nobody'll believe him, an' so to issue the check means he'll have to get out of Piñon before ever his check comes back dishonored from Cinnabar.

He sits there a minute figgerin' it out, an' Ballarat Bob, winkin' at me an' Doc Bleeker, decides the issue for him. He shoves over forty more browns an' sets aside two more markers, which Poundstone accepts. As Doc Bleeker an' Ballarat explain to me later, there is a psychology to gamblin', an' Ballarat knew the psychological moment to act. A feller that's winnin' is satisfied to place small bets an' rake in a modest profit, but the feller that's a heavy loser, nine times out o' ten forces his hand, makin' larger an' larger bets an' plungin' like a runaway hoss. As the Doc remarks later, the graves on the hillside back o' Monte Carlo is filled with silent arguments in support o' this theory.

When that stack is gone, the Colonel makes his decision. To-morrow mornin' he'll dump that other fifty thousand shares on the market, clean up an' vamoose; to-night when he finishes playin' he'll issue Ballarat Bob a check for a keepsake, but in the meantime he'll go as far as Ballarat Bob will let him. We can all see his thoughts racin' up and down his Adam's apple. He drums a little on the table, coughs once an' says:

"Give me a thousand more."

"Blue—a hundred each?" says Ballarat Bob, polite as a barber.

"Yes. An' what's the limit?"

"When the house is playin' in luck, Colonel," says Ballarat, "the limit is whatever the customer cares to make it."

"This game is gettin' over my head," I says. "I feel like a piker."

"Same here," says Doc Bleeker, an' we both cash in an' set watchin' Ballarat an' the Colonel.

The Colonel spreads his blue chips here and there, coppered or open; he pyramids his bets, doubles an' redoubles, sweats, puffs an' loses—steady an' heavy.

As fast as he goes bankrupt, Ballarat says casual an' kindly: "How many?" an' passes over more chips! Son, it's scandalous. Finally it comes to the last turn, with three cards remainin' in the box. The Colonel glances at the cases, then at the three blue chips he's got left.

"I'll call the turn, Robert," he says, endeavorin' to appear cheerful. "Trey, jack, king." You understand, of course, he's endeavorin' to name the exact location of every card in the box. Ballarat turns the cards:

"The turn is jack, king, trey, Colonel,—good ol' Jack King, the first man hung in Boston,—an' the *dinero* belongs to the party o' the first part," says Ballarat, an' rakes in the three blue chips.

The Colonel's face is quite a study in mixed emotions, as Doc Bleeker would say. He swallows his tongue a time or two an' then says casual: "Well, shove over another stack, Robert."

Ballarat Bob glances casual at the markers, which represent sixty-eight hundred dollars. "Hold on here a minute, Colonel," he says. "These here markers is gettin' more or less numerous. How much money have you got in the bank?"

Of course this is the signal for the Colonel to remember he's a Southern gentleman. "That, sah," he says, "is none of your damned business, sah. I'm a Southern gentleman, sah, an' amply able to meet any obligations that I may contract, sah."

"Wa-ll, you'll have to show me, brother," says Ballarat Bob. "An' more-over, whenever a customer gets ugly with me, right then an' there he's got to hunt a new gamblin' house. First thing I know, you'll be accusin' me o' runnin' a sandy on you—an' then there'd be trouble—deep, dark-red trouble with sky-blue trimmin's; so let's avoid that, Colonel, by closin' this session. Prompt settlements makes long friends. Gimme yore check for sixty-eight hundred dollars, go yore way an' sin no more."

The Colonel writes his check with a flourish. Ballarat blots it and chucks it careless-like into his cash drawer, an' then leans back for a long, severe look at Colonel Elmer Poundstone. His scrutiny continues so long it makes the

Colonel nervous, an' he asks what there's about him to make Ballarat stare so.

"Why, it's that wide yaller streak in you, Colonel," says Ballarat pleasantly, an' then he stands up, slams his chair back ag'in' the wall an' slaps the Colonel's face so hard the sound of the clout could be heard from here to our camp up on the mesa.

"You wuthless, ornery skunk," he says, "I had a curiosity to see just how far you'd go. Ever since you struck this camp you been pikin' around, buckin' faro games like the short-horn, dead-beat shyster that you are. 'I'll have to give you a check,' you say when you lose, an' it's: 'Mr. Gambler, give me the money,' when you win. Your check! You know in your rotten heart you'll telegraph the Cinnabar National Bank first thing in the mornin' to stop payment on it. Now, listen to me, *hombre*. I don't want you around here any more, because I aint got no more use for you than I have for your two wuthless checks." An' Ballarat pulls open his cash drawer, takes out the two checks, tears 'em into pieces an' throws the fragments into the Colonel's burnin' face. "Git!" he roars, "an' if you ever show up in my gamblin' house again, I'll kill you most awful dead."

"Good evenin', gentlemen," says the Colonel, bowin' low to me an' Doc Bleeker. "At another time an' another place I will argue this matter with our friend Ballarat Bob, and in the meantime, gentlemen, if you are not averse to takin' the advice of a fool, you will avoid the trained faro decks of Mr. Ballarat Bob and his cunning case-keeper."

"Folks regard our checks as hockable security, Colonel," says the case-keeper. "We will meet again," says the Colonel.

"Coffee an' pistols for two?" says Ballarat Bob.

"No. Make it three, Colonel, old sport," says the case-keeper, but the Colonel walks out without replyin', while Ballarat Bob opens his cash drawer an' hauls out Colonel Elmer Poundstone's checks for sixty-eight hundred an' two hundred dollars respectively.

"Them checks I tore up," says Ballarat, "was just a pair o' blanks I tore

out o' my own check-book! Me an' the Colonel does business at the same bank in Cinnabar. Naturally, the pole-cat'll think I've tore up his checks, in consequence o' which he wont take the trouble to telegraph the bank to stop payment—an oversight that I'll take advantage of to go to the bank in person an' cash the checks."

"Ballarat," says Doc Bleeker, "you're

for a good breakfast, an' promptly at ten o'clock we're in front o' the payin' teller's window of the First National, a-demandin' the wherewithal.

"Seven thousand dollars, eh?" says the teller. "The Colonel must have been rollin' 'em high an' had a change o' heart." An' he goes back an' looks up the Colonel's account. "Sorry, Ballarat," he says, "but there aint sufficient funds to meet these checks."

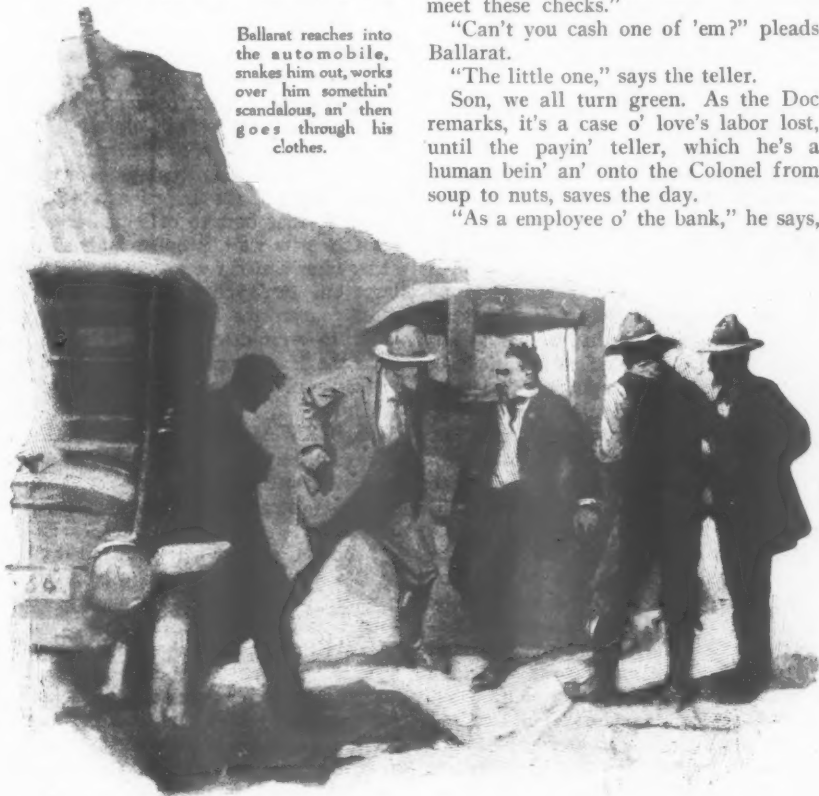
"Can't you cash one of 'em?" pleads Ballarat.

"The little one," says the teller.

Son, we all turn green. As the Doc remarks, it's a case o' love's labor lost, until the payin' teller, which he's a human bein' an' onto the Colonel from soup to nuts, saves the day.

"As a employee o' the bank," he says,

Ballarat reaches into the automobile, snakes him out, works over him somethin' scandalous, an' then goes through his clothes.



a genius—an out an' out, twenty-four-carat genius set in platinum, an' I love you like a brother. Let us adjourn to the bar an' in a quart o' the choicest vintage of France celebrate this most amazin' triumph o' virtue over sinfulness and deceit."

Well, son, we celebrate the victory, an' then Ballarat hires an automobile an' invites me an' the Doc to accompany him over to Cinnabar. We get there in time

"I aint supposed to divulge bank secrets, but I'll say this—in confidence: the Colonel's account is shy fifteen hundred."

Ballat Bob looks at him a minute, an' then he gets the idea. He writes his own check for fifteen hundred, dee-posit it to the credit of Colonel Elmer Poundstone an' shows the duplicate dee-posit tag to the payin' teller. "Now that I've sweetened the Colonel's kitty," he announces, "mebbe you'll cash his checks!"

THREE hours later we're on our way back to Piñon, when we spot an auto' comin' to beat four of a kind. There's a lone passenger in back, an' as we each slack up to pass on the narrow trail, we see this passenger is Colonel Elmer Poundstone. I have the driver covered quicker'n greased lightnin', an' order him to pull up, which he does *pronto*.

"We aint after you, son," I says to the chuffer. "Just git out an' rest while we-all interview the Colonel." An' I draw down on the Colonel an' order him out of the car.

"What is the meanin' of this high-handed proceedin'?" says the Colonel in his best manner—but he stays in the car.

"Why," says Ballarat Bob, "I reckon it means that you unloaded that other fifty thousand shares of Cinnabar Consolidated that you stole from Mrs. Hardy, an' now you're dustin' along to Cinnabar to cash the check. I'd be obliged, Colonel, if you was to hand me that check. You needn't bother to endorse it, becuz I'm goin' to hand it back to the broker that bought yore stock. I reckon you didn't wait for the mornin' session o' the Piñon stock exchange, but cut the price a little an' sold direct to the broker. Of course, when I explain to him that he's received stolen goods, he'll trade 'em to me for his check."

"This is an infamous lie," says the Colonel, but he don't get no further. Ballarat reaches into the automobile, snakes him out, works him over some-thin' scandalous an' then goes through his clothes. Sure enough, he finds the broker's check, which he confiscates. Then he gives the Colonel a hundred dollars for a road-stake, chucks him back in the car an' tells the chuffer to deliver him at Cinnabar, an' we jog on to Piñon, where we interview the stock-broker. Of course he don't doubt the word of three such citizens as Ballarat Bob, Doc Bleeker an' Chuckwalla Bill Redfield, an' he surrenders the stock to us without protest when we hand him back his check.

After that we three get together to cast up the Colonel's account. He's cost us five thousand dollars to get back that first block of Cinnabar Consolidated, but at that, even after deductin' the expenses of our trip to Cinnabar, arnica

for Ballarat's skinned knuckles, an' the hundred-dollar road-stake to the Colonel, we're a hundred an' eight dollars richer'n when we start.

"Whatever'll we do with this hundred an' eight dollars," says Doc Bleeker.

"Wa-ll," says Ballarat, "seein' as I bought up two wuthless fifty-dollar checks signed by the Colonel, payin' therefor fifty cents on the dollar, I reckon I'll just return them two checks to the Colonel's bank, to be held till called for. That leaves us just eight dollars to the good, an' I suggest we blow that for a quart o' champagne an' drink *bon voyage* to the Colonel! An' in the meantime, Chuckwalla, you might telegraph Mrs. Hardy at yore own expense, just what's happened. It'd be just like that cuss to call on her when his face gets well, propose marriage an charge her a stiff fee to get shet of him later on. An' you know, Chuckwalla, since you an' me aint done nothin' but labor to guarantee that kid's schoolin' since the Hardy family struck the camp, we can't afford to miss a trick now."

CHUCKWALLA BILL chuckled again, settled himself in his blankets and prepared to sleep.

"What became of Ballarat Bob?" I queried.

"When Cinnabar Con. went to twenty cents a share, I concluded one hundred per cent profit was good enough for me—so I unloaded on Ballarat. He hung on, an' Cinnabar Con. flew to sixteen dollars when my young engineer friend busted into the high-grade. I suppose it's just as well things turn out thataway, becuz I never did know what to do with a million dollars when I had it, an' any time I'm hard up now, my credit is always good with Ballarat—so I'm just as happy as if I was rich. Ballarat quits gamblin' an' buys a cattle ranch."

"And Mrs. Hardy and the youngster?"

"Wa-ll," Chuckwalla Bill snickered, "the last time I was passin' through Humboldt County, I stopped over at Ballarat's ranch, an' Mrs. Ballarat Bob 'lows to me in confidence as how her husband's the handsomest man in the whole State o' Nevada. An' the kid's callin' him 'Popper!'"



The Stolen Umbrella

*PHILO GUBB, the correspondence-school
detectative, grapples a new mystery.*

By Ellis Parker Butler

The foremost humorist in America.

ILLUSTRATED BY REA IRVIN

MRS. CORA MAY ORGUS, as she sat facing Philo Gubb in his office on the second floor of the Opera House Block, was telling a large, white fib, and Philo Gubb, as he blinked at her with his birdlike eyes, knew it. Mrs. Orgus held in her hand her solid-gold mesh-bag, and as she spoke, she wrapped the chain handle around and around her forefinger nervously.

"It isn't necessary in any manner or shape to explain into details," said the famous paper-hanger-detective. "Your umbrella was taken by some person or persons unknown—"

"Somewhere on Main Street, or at the Library, or elsewhere," said Mrs. Orgus nervously. "I must have left it standing, and some one took it."

"Umbrellys," said Philo Gubb sagely, "are the most frequentest objects of the crime of theft."

"But," said Mrs. Orgus, dropping her eyes before the searching gaze of the correspondence-school graduate of detecting science, "you don't understand how vital it is that I should have that umbrella back. I—I—I will make a confession, Mr. Gubb. You know, I hold a very high social position here in Riverbank. I am one of the leaders in the best set, and as such I have many rivals—many, and most vicious rivals, Mr. Gubb, who would gladly cast such ridicule on me that I should be driven to seek obscurity."

"Yes'm," said Philo Gubb.

Mrs. Orgus ventured a glance at the detective's face and dropped her eyes again.

"I—probably I need not tell you," said Mrs. Orgus, "that I have won my high position in Riverbank society through the work I have done in the Ladies' Culture Club—my papers, you

know, my little essays on everything that is interesting to the modern woman. From the first they were a great success. It—it was on account of them I was made president of the Club. And that placed me in my high social position. You can understand that."

"Yes'm," said Mr. Gubb. Mrs. Orgus twined her bag-handle around her finger.

"Well, Mr. Gubb," she said, with an attempt at appearing frank, "I did not write one of those papers of mine. You will keep this as silent as the tomb, but I must tell you. A—a certain party wrote them. I—I—when I had to write my first paper, I was frightened almost to death, and then I heard of a—a certain party who knew about the subject, and—and I went to him—to her, I mean—and she wrote the paper for me. For a money consideration, Mr. Gubb. And he—she, I mean—has written all my papers since then. She—she writes a masculine hand."

"Some female ladies do," agreed Mr. Gubb, kindly.

"Yes," said Mrs. Orgus, relieved that Mr. Gubb seemed to accept her explanation without question. "And you can see what a row it would make if anyone discovered that all my famous papers were written by—by this person. I would be ridiculed out of Riverbank, Mr. Gubb. So I have had to be very careful. Much as I hated it, I have had to use subterfuge. I have not dared to go openly to the—the person."

"It wouldn't do," agreed Mr. Gubb.

"No," said Mrs. Orgus. "So, Thursdays I take a book to the Library and get another book. There is an umbrella-rack in the vestibule. I put the—the remuneration in an umbrella and roll the umbrella neatly and put it in the umbrella-rack. Then the—the party comes to the Library with my next paper rolled in his—in her umbrella and puts that umbrella in the rack, —when I go out, I take that umbrella; thus we make the exchange and nobody ever guesses."

"Nobody ever would," said Mr. Gubb patiently.

"Only," said Mrs. Orgus, "yesterday somebody stole the umbrella—stole the umbrella with the new paper in it." She twined the chain handle more nervously. "Somebody took it out of the umbrella-rack. The—the paper was in an envelope—in a long envelope—wrapped in the umbrella. I suppose there was a bill in the envelope—a bill that says: 'Mrs. Orgus, debtor to a Certain Party, for writing one essay on "The Inner Meaning of the European War," so much.' And if that got into the hands of any of my rivals—you can understand, Mr. Gubb! It would be awful, wouldn't it? So that's why I want the umbrella back just as it was taken from—from wherever I left it. You can see that, I'm sure."

"I can see into it with one eye," said Mr. Gubb.



"You will keep this as silent as the tomb."

"So you'll do everything you can, wont you?" urged Mrs. Orgus. She opened her purse and fumbled in it. "Here's fifty dollars," she said. "It's a retainer—don't they call it that? And when you get the umbrella and the—the envelope, I'll give you fifty more."

"Umbrellys," said Mr. Gubb, getting to his feet as his client arose, "is one of the hardest things to recover back."

"If—if it will cost more, I am perfectly willing to pay—"

"No'm," said the paper-hanger-detective. "One hundred dollars will be amply plenty, and I'll do the best that is into human mortality to do."

FOR a while after Mrs. Orgus had departed, leaving an odor of white lilac, Philo Gubb stood in deep thought. He was right in saying a stolen umbrella was one of the most difficult things to recover. An umbrella is the one material thing in which mankind refuses to recognize property rights. Whoever puts his hand on an umbrella feels that it is his property until some other man happens to put his hand on it. The person with a conscience so delicate that he would not take a daisy from a ten-acre waste lot without asking permission, will pick out the best umbrella in a rack and carry it off without a twinge. To recover a stolen umbrella is like trying to recover a raindrop that has fallen into the Atlantic Ocean. Your attention is called to the fact that neither *Sherlock Holmes* nor any of the other famous detectives has ever attempted to recover a stolen umbrella. Before such a task they shrink appalled.

Philo Gubb walked to his window and looked out upon the roof of the Hentz & Morney Garage. In Mrs. Orgus' story he had noticed several glaring defects. In one place she had said she had lost the umbrella at the Library, and in another she had not been sure where she lost it. She had not been quite sure whether the "certain party" was male or female, until she settled upon the suggestion that she was a female with a penmanship like that of a male. Mr. Gubb did not believe the story about the lady who wrote Mrs. Orgus' essays; he scented a surreptitious romance, inno-

cent, perhaps, but annoying if discovered by Mr. Orgus.

Mrs. Orgus, moreover, could not be sure whether the stolen umbrella was cotton or silk, whether it was black, blue-black or green-black, whether the handle was of metal or wood. She was extremely vague about the umbrella. In short, Philo Gubb had no description of the umbrella, except that it had contained—wrapped in its folds—a long envelope addressed to Mrs. Orgus. And his task was to recover the umbrella. He turned from his window and seated himself at his desk. There he wrote two copies of an advertisement to be inserted in the two local papers the next morning:

WARNING! The party who stole an umbrella recently is known. Unless the umbrella is left at my office immediately, *exactly as it was when stolen*, the guilty party may expect the full rigor of the law.

PHILO GUBB, Detectative,
Opera House Block,
Riverbank, Iowa.

"EIGHT-SEVEN!" said Philo Gubb monotonously.

He was sitting in his desk-chair with his face toward his door the morning after Mrs. Orgus' visit to his office. It was three minutes after nine and he had not yet had his breakfast. At four o'clock he had been awakened by stealthy feet in the corridor. He heard some one fumbling at his door, and he sat up in bed. He put out his hand for his electric flash-lamp, which he always kept under his pillow, and trained the ray on the door. He saw the brass flap of the mail-slot in the central panel of his door rise slowly and a slim rod of steel glide through. This was followed by a wand of tightly rolled silk, and the next instant Philo Gubb's sleepy eyes recognized it as an umbrella. It hung poised for a moment and then plumped in onto the floor. There was a rush of feet in the corridor, a clatter of heels down the metal-shod stairs, and Philo Gubb leaped from his bed and grasped the umbrella. He had won! He opened the umbrella. No long, thin envelope fell to the floor. He had not won! It had been nothing but the pressman of the

Eagle taking the first possible moment to return the umbrella he had picked up at the Star Lunch Room.

"Eighty-eight!" said Philo Gubb, as another umbrella glided through the mail-slot and fell on the rapidly accumulating pile. It was four minutes after nine. He arose, pushed back the pile of umbrellas and went out to get his breakfast at the Star Lunch, locking the door behind him. On his coat he pinned the gold-plated badge of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting, Graduate of the First Class, and walked down to the street. On the stairway two gentlemen stepped aside to let him pass. They blushed as he passed them, and each held some object behind his back. Mr. Gubb carelessly ignored them, for they were two prominent citizens. He stepped into the street. Hen Gunstein, proprietor of Gunstein's Harness and Saddle Shop, stood in his door, evidently awaiting Mr. Gubb. He drew him inside the shop.

"I couldn't leave the shop, Mr. Gubb," he said hastily, "because there was no one here; otherwise, I assure you, I would have brought the umbrella up to you before this. And I should ask you, Mr. Gubb, if anybody says anything about it, that you would assure them I am not a thief, by no means. The fact is, Mr. Gubb, the umbrella was standing all alone on the corner of Main Street and the Avenue, when I was coming home, right where any thief could pick it up, and it would be gone for good; so what could I do but fetch it to my shop, where anybody ought to know enough to come and ask for it? Here it is, Mr. Gubb, and I assure you I am glad to get it off my hands again—I have had such trouble keeping it from getting greased up."

He placed an umbrella in Mr. Gubb's hands and fairly pushed him from the shop. He breathed a deep sigh of relief as he saw that Mr. Gubb did not mean to arrest him.

WHEN Mr. Gubb took his seat at the counter of the Star Lunch, he had five umbrellas to deposit behind the brass rail at his feet, before he could order his ham and eggs. Four prominent

business men, hurrying to their business, had stopped Philo Gubb and had insisted that he accompany them and receive the umbrellas that had been mysteriously left in their stores.

"Hey, Tony!" called the boy behind the counter, as he drew Mr. Gubb's cup of coffee.

"Yes, what do you want?" Tony shouted back from the kitchen.

"One ham and eggs. And Mr. Gubb is here."

Tony came from the kitchen, wiping his hands on his apron. He got down on his knees and reached under the old black-walnut sideboard. From this most excellent hiding-place he drew an umbrella. He carried it to Mr. Gubb.

"I told Joe to let me know when you came in," he explained. "I've been trying to get rid of this umbrella for a week. I've asked everybody that came in if they owned it. Gee! if you knew how much time I've wasted trying to get rid of this—" He stopped and glared at Joe. "What you grinning at?" he demanded. "Well, you needn't grin! I just put it under that sideboard so no light-fingered fellow wouldn't make off with it."

Mr. Gubb was looking at the umbrella, turning it over and over, feeling its folds for a chance crackle of paper.

"Well, thunder!" said Tony disgustedly. "What do I care? Maybe I *have* got a couple more, if that aint the one. You can take 'em all. I'm tired and sick of havin' them around. Can't use them for fear somebody will recognize them, anyway. Here!"

From beneath the sideboard he scraped out four more umbrellas. He almost threw them at Philo Gubb and went back to his kitchen growling, while Joe grinned.

"He's holdin' out the gold-headed one on you," said Joe in a whisper. "When he shuts the door, I'll hand it to you." And he did, taking it from among the cups and saucers behind the counter.

When Philo Gubb returned to his office, his arms filled with umbrellas, his first view of his office door was obstructed by the broad back of Judge Herring. As Philo Gubb first caught

sight of him, Judge Herring seemed to be trying in vain to force an umbrella into the mail-slot of Philo Gubb's door. As the Judge heard Philo Gubb, he cast one glance over his shoulder, dropped an umbrella on the floor by the door, and fled guiltily into his own office, which was just across the hall. He closed the door and locked it.

As Philo Gubb reached his door, he understood why the Judge had had difficulty in forcing the umbrella into the mail-slot. The floor around his door was covered with umbrellas. Umbrellas stood against the door. Umbrellas stood against the wall. Eight umbrellas protruded from the mail-slot, and one lone umbrella stuck straight out into the hall, its tip inserted in the keyhole. This umbrella had a desperate, eager appearance. It seemed to say: "I know I can't get through the keyhole, but you can see I am doing my best to get into your office. You can't blame me, anyway!"

Philo Gubb removed the umbrella from his keyhole and unlocked the door. He was obliged to straddle the pile of umbrellas to do so, and as he pushed gently against his door, the door did not yield. He pushed harder. He pushed as hard as he could, leaning his shoulder against the door, and slowly the door yielded—inch by inch—until Philo Gubb was able to insert his head and look into the room. He understood then why the door had refused to open. On the floor umbrellas lay in a great pile, stacked against the door hit or miss, like cordwood thrown over a fence. He edged himself through the narrow opening and entered, closing the door. He stood with his back against the door and stared at this mass of evidence that Riverbank contained many umbrella thieves. Suddenly he felt a sharp pain in the back. Some one, eager to restore a stolen umbrella, had thrust it through the mail-slot and had jabbed Mr. Gubb with the point.

ABOUT three o'clock that afternoon Mr. Gubb's telephone bell jingled, and Mr. Gubb dropped the work of cording the umbrellas against his east wall long enough to answer it. He hated to have the work interrupted. He had been

working hard all day, without intermission for luncheon, stacking the umbrellas. Sometimes he gained perceptibly on the pile on his floor, and sometimes the umbrellas showered through his mail-slot faster than he could care for them, and he was eager to clear the floor before the business men began to go home for the day, when he expected a fresh flood of umbrellas. He hoped to be able to stack the entire day's receipts before eight o'clock so that he might spend the night opening the umbrellas in search for the long, thin envelope addressed to Mrs. Orgus in a masculine hand. But he went to the telephone.

"Mr. G.?" queried a voice, evidently bent on caution. "This is Mrs. O. Have you recovered the u.?"

"The which?" asked Detective Gubb.

"This is Mrs. O.," repeated the voice. "Have you recovered the u.? You know what I refer to. The thing I mentioned to you yesterday. The thing that can go up a chimney down, but can't come down a chimney up. Have you recovered it yet?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Gubb. "You refer to the missing u-m-b-r-e-l-l-y! Well, ma'am, I don't know if I have or I haven't. Up to the present date of time I have a clue that indicates that an umbrella was stolen in Riverbank at no long distant period, if not sooner, and any minute I may put my hand onto the particular one you wish to recover back."

He looked over his shoulder at the mass of umbrellas.

"Umbrellys," he said, "is one of the hardest things to recover back."

"You'll let me know at the earliest possible moment, please!" said Mrs. Orgus, and she hung up her receiver suddenly. Mr. Gubb went back to his task.

At sunrise the next morning he dropped the last umbrella on the floor. He had opened them all, and not one of them had contained a long, thin envelope addressed to Mrs. Orgus in a masculine hand. Mr. Gubb stretched his arms above his head, yawned and dropped back on his bed. He was asleep when his head was still in midair, and when his head struck his pillow he was already dreaming.

MR. HENRY ORGUS was one of the most jealous men in Riverbank, and there was a rumor that he had more or less reason for jealousy. His wife, Mrs. Cora May Orgus, may never have been deservedly blamed for thinking too much of other men, but she undoubtedly ventured too near the danger line at times in her little flirtations, and Mr. Orgus, on the occasion of his last burst of jealous rage, had told her flatly that the next time would be the last time.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Orgus was, at that moment, in the midst of a most interesting and amusing flirtation. It was an absolutely platonic affair and, she felt, as harmless as anything could be, and quite unlike the affair that had thrown Mr. Orgus into such a rage. This being the case, she could not quite make up her mind to cut it short, and she dalled with it pleasantly. The man in the case was so young—hardly more than a mere boy—and his mode of flirting so poetical and sweet and pure, that she felt there was no harm, except in the case of Mr. Orgus' becoming jealous over that particular matter. To avoid this, she urged the young poet (his name was Winthrop Pett Huth, and he was still in the High School, although in the graduating class) to be most careful. She must let him meet her no more. In fact, it would not do to have him sending letters to the house. Mr. Orgus might happen to discover them and raise a terrible row.

They considered, on that last walk together, the romantic possibility of hiding their correspondence in a hollow tree (which is the natural post office of lovers), but the nearest available hollow tree of which either of them knew was on the corner of Wade's Lane and the Cross Creek Road, eight miles from town, and it seemed a little inconvenient. Mrs. Orgus, therefore, thought of the umbrella post, as she gayly called it. Mondays and Thursdays she was to leave a note-loaded umbrella in the umbrella-rack in the vestibule of the Library while she went inside to exchange a book; and Mondays and Thursdays, Winthrop Pett Huth was to drop in at the Library, exchange an umbrella containing his epistle for the one she had

left in the rack, and then walk into the Library. They would pass in the open lobby. They would exchange a chaste smile of greeting. Mrs. Orgus would take the umbrella containing his epistle from the rack, and no one would be the wiser.

This idyllic little affair stopped short with a frightful shock on the Thursday when Mrs. Orgus, after smiling at Win Huth in the Library lobby, went to take the waiting umbrella from the rack in the lobby. The umbrella was gone!

Exposure of her harmless flirtation with Winnie Huth stared her in the face. Her social rivals, always on the alert to pull her down,—if any of them secured the long, thin envelope addressed to her by Win Huth, and no doubt containing, as his long, thin envelopes usually did, verses that rhymed "Cora May" with "light of day" and, of course, "darling" with "starling,"—would fairly laugh her out of the Culture Club. And if Henry Orgus ever saw the envelope and its contents! Mrs. Orgus fairly gasped with fright. The next day she consulted Philo Gubb, with the results we have seen.

ABOUT nine o'clock Sunday morning, as Mr. Gubb stood on a small island of bare floor in the midst of an ocean of umbrellas, putting the final touch to his toilet, Mr. Winthrop Pett Huth tapped on his door and Mr. Gubb admitted him. The young man, who carried an umbrella under his arm, was in an extremely nervous state. When Mr. Gubb dropped a collar-button on the floor, Mr. Huth jumped fully a foot in the air and uttered an exclamation of fear. When he realized his fright had been caused by a collar-button, he smiled a sickly smile and wiped his blond forehead sheepishly.

"I didn't know about your advertisement until this morning," he said. "Honest, I didn't, Mr. Gubb. If I had, I would have brought this umbrella immediately. I'm not a thief, Mr. Gubb." He was woefully distressed. Tears stood in his blue eyes and his chin quivered.

"I hope you will not put me in jail," he pleaded. "I thought this umbrella had come into my hands honestly. I—I

didn't know it belonged to Mr. Orgus."

Philo Gubb looked at him sternly.

"The mortal human mind don't ever know to whom an umbrella belongs to," he said. "In what way did you obtain possession of the having of this umbrella?"

Young Mr. Huth broke down and weeping as he sobbed out the words, confessed the truth. For three days, indeed, he had been in an agony of uncertainty. For three days he had been trying to get word to or from Cora May, and she had refused to hold the slightest communication with him. He confessed the whole of their harmless affair. On Thursday, after school, he had as usual started for the Library with a sentimental poem in a long, thin envelope. He had gone downtown first. Somewhere on Main Street, while he was making some small purchase, some one had stolen the umbrella containing the long, thin envelope from his side where he had left it leaning for a moment against some counter or showcase. He had been greatly dismayed by this. He had thought what people would think if the sentimental poem addressed to Mrs. Orgus were found in the umbrella. He made a hurried tour of the shops he had visited, but had not found the umbrella, and he went to the Library. He had found there the umbrella left by Mrs. Orgus and had taken it from the rack and had entered the Library, eager to have a word with Cora May and to

warn her of the danger threatening her because of the stolen umbrella. But she must have slipped out. And since then she had refused to see him or answer his telephone calls or pay any attention to him whatever.

For three days he had been tramping the streets trying to find the stolen umbrella, and now, as a fresh shock, he had seen Mr. Gubb's advertisement and had jumped to the conclusion that Cora May had taken one of Mr. Orgus' umbrellas to leave at the Library and that Mr. Orgus was taking severe measures to



The mass of evidence that Riverbank contained many umbrella thieves.

secure its return. Philo Gubb listened in silence until the young man had concluded his hysterical recitation. Then he took the umbrella from him and unrolled it and looked inside. There was no long, thin envelope in it, and he tossed it carelessly upon the tangled mass of umbrellas.

"You needn't be frightened of being put into jail, for you won't be put," said Mr. Gubb, and Mr. Huth instantly brightened.

"Oh, then—then I can ask you to help me!" he cried. "Then I can beg and implore you, Mr. Gubb, to take my case and help me find the umbrella that was stolen from me! You will, won't you? I haven't much money—I've only twenty-eight dollars and sixty-two cents—but it shall all be yours if you will help me."

"I should do so with the utmost gladness for twenty-eight dollars, and you can keep the sixty-two cents," said Mr. Gubb. "Umbrellys are still coming in at a fair to middling rate,"—one popped through the mail-slot as he spoke,—"and the desired specimen may arrive at any moment of time, but if you will furnish me up with a list of the shops you might have been into when the umbrelly was taken off from you, I'll get right to work to-morrow morning, using any one of the twenty-eight disguises I have on hand, or more if need be. I should say," he said thoughtfully, "that if I took Whiskers Number 18 and Yiddish Vegetable Dealer Suit Number 22 and disguised myself up in them, I could start out with half a dozen of these umbrellys and be taken for an umbrelly mender by one and all, including sundry. An umbrelly-to-mend person should ought to be admitted into the bosom of the umbrelly realm of this town without suspicion."

"Couldn't you get to work to-day?" asked Mr. Huth.

"Onto the Sabbath Day a detectakive of religious mind don't do no detectaking," said Mr. Gubb reprovingly.

And with this Mr. Huth had to be satisfied.

ABOUT half-past eleven, Mrs. Orgus, having pleaded a headache and let Mr. Orgus go to church alone, called up

Mr. Gubb and asked whether he had succeeded in doing anything about the stolen umbrella.

"You *must* make haste!" she urged. "I know Mr. Orgus suspects something. He walks up and down the rooms with his hands behind him, muttering to himself and throwing glances at me. He ate no breakfast. Three times he jumped up from the table and started to the door, only to come back muttering. I'm sure he suspects. Please, please, Mr. Gubb, find the umbrella! If he gets it into his hands, he will murder me, in his present distracted state. He is not himself. He—a deacon of his church and always most particular about his dress, for he takes up the collection—started to church just as it began to drizzle, and he started without an umbrella. He wore a straw hat and his overcoat with the fur collar, and he had on one tan shoe and one patent-leather. Do hurry, Mr. Gubb! If he discovers anything definite, he may kill me!"

"Umbrellys are arriving right along regular," said Mr. Gubb. "The only thing we can do to-day is to hope for the best and look inside of all the umbrellys that come in. To-morrow I will start out to begin to commence. I can't do no more upon the Sabbath Day. If your life partner starts in to murder you, I will make an exception, that being the wrong thing for him to do. If he begins to kill you, ma'am, telephone me at once immediately and I will break all rules of the Rising Sun Detectakive Agency's Correspondence School of Detectaking for once and start detectaking immediately. That's the best I can do."

Evidently Mr. Orgus did not begin murdering his wife that day, for Mr. Gubb heard no more from Mrs. Orgus.

THE next morning, bright and early, Mr. Gubb donned Whiskers Number 18 and Yiddish Vegetable Dealer Suit Number 22 and started out. Under his arm he carried half a dozen of the poorest specimens of umbrella he had received, and as he walked along the street, he cried, "Umbrellys to mend! Umbrellys to mend!" in a loud, clear voice.

This difference may be noted between the detectives of Scotland Yard (Lon-

don) and Philo Gubb (Riverbank, Iowa): The detectives of Scotland Yard seldom use disguises, but when they do, the disguises completely conceal the identity of the wearers, while Philo Gubb invariably wore disguises, but they deceived no one at all. There were many persons in Riverbank who could glance at Philo Gubb once, when he went out fully disguised, and not only recognize Philo Gubb but give the catalogue number of each piece of his disguise. When Philo Gubb bought a new piece of disguise, everyone in town knew it immediately, and when he wore it for the first time, the citizens were not unlikely to flock to Main Street and stand massed along the sidewalks to see him pass by, just as they gathered to see Barnum & Bailey's Grand Free Street Parade.

It was not surprising, therefore, that when Philo Gubb stepped from the doorway of the Opera House Block and started down the Avenue toward Main Street, several merchants should see him and say: "Ah! There goes Gubb the Detective! He is on the trail. I am glad I returned that umbrella."

The news that the correspondence-school detective was sleuthing, spread rapidly. Word passed from mouth to mouth: "Gubb is detecting again. He is disguised in Whiskers Number 18 and Yiddish Vegetable Dealer Suit Number 22. He has umbrellas under his arm, and he is crying, 'Umbrellys to mend! Umbrellys to mend!' The man who stole the umbrella Gubb is trying to recover had better look out!"

By the time Mr. Gubb reached the corner of the Avenue and Main Street, eighteen small boys, two negroes and a dog were following him, and the merchants of the Avenue whose shops he

had passed were standing in their doorways staring after him, hoping to catch a view of the famous detective in action. At the corner, the dog having gotten between Mr. Gubb's feet, the detective stopped and shifted his umbrellas from one arm to the other. As he did so he let his birdlike eyes glance idly across the street toward the plate-glass window of the Riverbank Mercantile Bank. As he looked he saw a bald-headed gentleman with fluffy brown mutton-chop

whiskers, who was standing inside the window, turn a brilliant red. Mr. Gubb crossed the street.

The effect on the bald-headed gentleman was strange: He threw up his hands, dashed to the rear of the bank, clapped a straw hat on his head and hurried into the street. He walked until he was immediately behind Mr. Gubb and then turned so that his back was to Mr. Gubb's back. Then he put his hand above his eyes and pretended to be peering up the street as if oblivious of Mr. Gubb's presence, but at the same time he cast these words over his shoulder into Philo Gubb's ears: "I surrender! I admit my guilt! I have the umbrella!"

Mr. Gubb raised his voice.

"Umbrellys to mend! Umbrellys to mend!" he shouted, and then in a low tone: "Good!"

"Money for you if you do not betray me," whispered the bald-headed financier, pretending to see some one far up the street and waving his hand. "Meet me in ten minutes alone, at the corner of Seventh and Jersey. Not a word!"

"Umbrellys to mend," cried Mr. Gubb, and whispering "I will do so," he moved away. Mr. Orgus, for it was Mr. Henry



For four days he had been suffering the direst pangs of a guilty conscience.

Orgus, combed his brown mutton chops nervously with his trembling fingers and darted back into the bank.

IT is true, as Shakespeare so ably puts it, that "suspicion haunts the guilty mind." Mr. Henry Orgus, deacon of the church, highly esteemed citizen and President of the Riverbank Mercantile Bank, had, for four days, been suffering the direst pangs of a guilty conscience, which means he had been in fear that he would be found out. For a man in his position to be heralded as a thief would have been a shocking thing. You or I, being only ordinarily reputable, might have risked returning a stolen umbrella, but Mr. Orgus, being the most reputable man in Riverbank, had not dared risk being seen carrying stolen goods.

He now hurried into his coat, his trembling hands almost unable to draw that garment over his shoulders, and issued from the rear door of the bank. He half loped and half ran through the alley and up a side street. From far away he could hear Philo Gubb's voice calling "Umbrellys to mend," and he stood on the corner of Seventh and Jersey nervously picking at his whiskers and hoping Mr. Gubb had understood him.

It was not easy for Mr. Gubb to reach any appointed spot "alone." Several times after leaving Mr. Orgus he turned and tried to drive away the gallery that was following him with the hope that it might see him perform one of his well-known detective miracles, but the gallery clung to him. A detective must solve perplexing problems, however, and Mr. Gubb was equal to this one. He turned in at the wide door of Herter's Livery, Feed and Sale Stable, ordered a closed cab, jumped in, slammed the door and was driven hastily away.

As he clambered out of the cab, Mr. Orgus grasped him by the arm.

"Fifty dollars if no word of this leaks out, Mr. Gubb!" he exclaimed. "Come! Be quick!"

It was evident that the banker was in great fear. He drew his hat over his eyes. He bent his back in an attempt to disguise himself. Up one street and

down another and through alleys he led Mr. Gubb. He crossed a large vacant lot and climbed over a high alley fence, dropping to the ground inside. He paused to see that he was not observed and darted for a cellar door and down a flight of cellar stairs. He crept cautiously up the inside cellar stairs and noiselessly opened the door. He entered a kitchen and listened for sounds. He passed through the kitchen into a dining-room and paused to listen again. He pushed aside a pair of heavy portières.

IN the hallway—Mr. Orgus' own hallway—Mrs. Cora May Orgus was standing. She was standing with one hand on a hat-rack, and there were tears in her eyes. She was gowned and hatted for the street, and she was evidently trying to decide whether to go out or stay in with her anxiety. As Mr. Orgus stepped through the portières he placed his finger on his lips warningly, cautioning his wife to silence. She gave one startled glance at Philo Gubb and placed her hand on her heart. For a moment it seemed that she would faint.

"Pardon me, my dear," said Mr. Orgus nervously. "Just a little matter of business I have with Mr. Gubb. If I may ask you to move just an inch or so—"

Mrs. Orgus moved three inches. Into the space thus made between Mrs. Orgus and the hat-rack, Mr. Orgus slipped his hand. There was an umbrella-jar there, and from the umbrella-jar he took an umbrella and handed it to Detective Gubb.

"There!" he said with a sigh of relief. And Philo Gubb, running his hand along the folded silk of the silver-handled umbrella, felt the hard crispness of a long, thin envelope.

"Is that all right?" asked Mr. Orgus.

"Everything connected up with umbrellas is now all completely O.K.," said Mr. Gubb, "and moneys due for detective work can be mailed to my office."

Fortunately Mr. Orgus' sigh of relief was so loud it quite completely drowned the sigh of relief uttered by Mrs. Cora May Orgus.

Next month: "Four Tufts of Golden Hair," a Philo Gubb story which will be of especial interest to all who followed the novel "Empty Pockets."

A Jump to the Jimson

THE sprightly sisters De Volle choose to be among the first in a little Indiana village rather than among the last in Manhattan.

By Walter Jones

Author of "Heavens of Brass," and other fine stories.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM VAN DRESSER

"FOR heaven's sakes, Aggie, quit tearin' the lining out o' that piano! This here's the fourth time I've ask' you. Absolutely, it seems to me you aint got no consideration for nobody." Em De Volle bit her thread savagely and tossed another fold of crêpy whiteness onto the ruffled heap beside her.

"Listen here, Em! This rag is some syncopation. Wicked for your left hand." Aggie anchored herself firmly to the music-stool and attacked the golden-oak upright with renewed vigor. "Listen, Em: it's one o' the numbers professionals use. You keep on vamping *ad lib.* till he cracks another stale gag about them Fords, or she taps him on the dome with her parasol, and then they break into a dance for their finish. That show-shop stuff's a cinch! Eddie St. Elmo says to me the other day, me and him could frame for a bench act and clean up the United Time easier'n Emma Calvé or Jess Willard."

"Aggie De Volle, that stage talk makes me perfectly sick! And it all comes o' your makin' up with a unprincipled chorus boy. Take it from me, he's too fly and handsome by half to be pursuin' a common counter-jumper like you without he's got some designs on you he shouldn't."

"Jealous, Em, that you didn't cop him out for yourself! Why don't you fold up those duds and trek around the block a couple o' times? Honest, to-day your complexion looks like one o' them before-usin' ad's in the subway!"

"Well, why wouldn't it? Settin' over

a sewin'-machine six years to make you a home, and a lot o' thanks I get. What pleasure is it to me goin' out, with the whole neighborhood sprawlin' on their steps lickin' ice-cream spoons, and them fresh kids doin' the tango all over the sidewalk, that'd sooner knock you down than not! Sunday in New York—"

"—is just what you make it, you old grouch! If it's not tony enough around here, hop a car to the Park, or ride out to Grant's tomb, or something."

"Grant's tomb! I'll be seein' my own soon enough, the way I been feelin' lately. Who'd get the supper?"

"Why, me, Em."

"Roquefort cheese and a can o' salmon! You wouldn't turn your hand over, you know you wouldn't. And this suit looks dipper'n Matteawan. I thought you was goin' to wash your hair to-day and redd up your bureau drawers."

"Oh, well, darn it, I was; but when you're hangin' over a mobby ribbon counter fifty hours a week, it seems like you'd ought to allow yourself the luxury o' dishabille Sundays."

"H'm, it's the only luxury you'll ever get. The agents are raisin' rents in this block, dearie; we've still got seven dollars to pay on that old refrigerator, which we ought to've got tin-lined 'stead of enamel; butter's so high you can't reach it with a aéroplane; your lingerie looks like a bundle o' rags; and—"

Aggie wheeled round to the piano and loud-pedaled the bass till her sister begged for mercy; but with the first moment of respite, Em began again. "And I had a letter from Oriopolis to-

day, and the agent stood me off four dollars' repairs on the rent; and he says if I aint got the house wired for electricity by the first o' the month, the tenants are goin' to leave."

"Oriopolis! What have they got to flash electricity on in that dump? If Aunt Em'd had any genuine affection for us, she'd have left us her diamond ring, or a sealskin coat, or something a person could take some comfort out of."

"Why, Aggie De Volle, you ungrateful—"

"Well, she would! What kind of a shack is it, anyway?"

"Like she had it fixed up the time I was out to her funeral, it was a right nifty little home; but that was four years ago, and the way the bills have been comin' in since, it must have been ridin' the skids for fair."

"You ought to sell it, I always told you. I wish the old place was in Jericho!"

"I don't. I wish I was right there now, on the front porch, turnin' the hose on my own petunias." Em leaned her thin elbow on the armchair and closed her eyes. "It was a real nobby little outfit, Aggie, like I'm tellin' you. Four rooms downstairs, the way I remember it, with a porch bigger'n this whole kitchenette flat, and climbin' vines, wild pickles or something, runnin' all over. Story and a half, with two cute chambers upstairs. The mourners set up there in Aunt Em's own bedroom with the blinds drawn; and when I went in, the woman in charge says five steps from the door you have to duck your head or the roof'll lay you flat. —My goodness, Aggie, there's some one at the door—and this apartment rowdier'n a Bleeker Street riot-call!"

Em jumped up and began stowing things with a practiced hand. Aggie slipped dexterously into her Oxfords. "Don't get all fussed up, Em! I expect it's only Eddie."

"That fly chorus boy again! I must kindly request you, Aggie—"

"Now see here, you've got to treat Mr. St. Elmo right, or I'll—"

"What a moniker! I bet his real name's MacGinnis."

"Please, Em—"

"Well, I wont start anything if he don't."

EDDIE entered the humble apartment of the sisters De Volle with as much brio as he did nightly the *Duke of Macedoine's* fancy-dress ball at the Forty-first Street Theater. "Hullo, girly," he greeted Aggie. "What were you two kids mixin' it about? Out on the landing it sounded like a couple o' sister acts fighting for a one-flight dressing-room. Pounding the box, Ag? Remember, I have a friend down in tin-pan alley that'll go to work on a frame-up for us any time I pass him the office. Em, you got a mitt like the North Pole! What do you think? Vi'let Donner was soused last night, and lost her slipper in the foots, and queered the whole flirtation number. There's a call posted for Monday morning rehearsal, and all the big tops are up in the air. It's a corking show, Miss De Volle. You ought to lay aside that Puritanical prejudice you have and look it over."

"Thanks for the passes," observed Emma icily; "but I've give 'em to my chiropodist. I suppose it's of no consequence, her usin' 'em or me?"

"None to the show. I trust I aint intruding. You girls weren't going out or nothing?"

Aggie assured him to the contrary. "Mr. St. Elmo's playing a club date in Brooklyn to-night," she explained, "and I just asked him to drop around first for a little bite o' supper. He's invited me along with him to sit in the balcony and watch the fracas."

"Listen, baby: here's one of our numbers, and it'll be some scream!" Eddie ringed his Fedora on the corner of Emma's rattan bookcase and sat down at the piano. "Close harmony to-night, but I'll just run it over now for you on the first tenor. What say, Miss de Volle?"

"Nothing. I was just thinkin' that certain persons certainly do know how to hand themselves the keys to the city. What shall I make, Aggie, coffee or chocolate?"

"Coffee for mine, old dear!" laughed the chorus boy. "You always know how to treat a guy fine out here. There aint



"Jealous, Em, that you didn't cop him out for yourself! Why don't you fold up those duds and trek around the block a couple o' times? Honert, to-day your complexion looks like one o' them before usin' ad's in the subway!"

nobody in New York fixes up them dainty cheese and pimento sandwiches like you, Miss De Volle."

WHILE Sister Emma got the supper going, Eddie and Aggie tossed off rags and *marivaudage* at the golden-oak. Em watched the flirtatious pair furtively, registering in her heart the while a stern resolve to rescue the family from the clutches of "the profession." "Come on to your supper," she called with dignity. "I think you folks are awful silly, not to say unduly familiar."

Aggie excused her sister's taciturnity. "Em's been on the blink lately, Mr. St.

Elmo. You mustn't mind her. Absolutely, a person can't say nothing, nor do nothing, to suit her. All the time she's taking vinegar to keep her from getting fat, when I think it'd be better—"

"She'd ought to get out and scamper on the green," advised Eddie cheerfully. "There's lots o' lambs still looking for their little playmates."

Em frowned majestically. "I wish you'd shut up, Aggie. My diet's of no interest to the public. Aggie's always jokin' it off, Mr. St. Elmo, but there's

William van Dusen

easier things in the world than makin' two ends meet in Manhattan."

"There sure is, Miss De Volle," sympathized Eddie. "Most o' the time last winter I went around underdressed for 'September Morn,' and it's only since 'The Spooky-Mooners' opened that I haint been borrowing my stage wardrobe for the street. A fellow don't like to touch his nest-egg."

"Real estate is an awful care," observed Aggie importantly. "Em's blue to-day because the agent stood her out on the rent—"

"What do you mean, Aggie—you own property?"

"Yes, a right cute little place—"

"Where at?"

"Oriopolis."

"Never heard o' the burg. Where is it—up beyond New Rochelle?"

Aggie laughed. "No, out in the jimson. Five hundred miles from Broadway. The agent stood her out, and he also says—"

"Aggie, I don't see the idea, discussin' family affairs before a perfect stranger. Have another piece o' the fruit-cake, Mr. St. Elmo."

"I don't care if I do. It's got brandy enough in to give a fellow a edge on! Say, Emma, why don't you come along with us to-night? It's going to be a neat little affair,—regular sacred concert,—nothing to agitate your morals; and the exercise'll do you good."

"Thanks, but I had enough o' sacred concerts. I was to one in Boston once that began with a organ recital and ended up with two stewed comedians in a wheelbarrow. A Ratskeller-act came down to the front o' the stage and says to the orchestra leader, 'Maybe we can't dance on Sunday. Gus, but there's other ways we can : out the works,' and then the gags they pulled was something indigo!"

"Well, Ag, if she wont come, we got to tear ourselves away, because my number's on at nine o'clock."

Emma saw them to the door with a parting caution: "Mind, Aggie, you said your department's got a sale on to-morrow, and if you're out later'n eleven to-night, you'll have to give me the why-for!"

After the pair had gone, she did up the dishes and then sat in the window with the letter from the Oriopolis agent in her hand. When she had read it for the fourth time, she scouted a nickel, went out to the pay-'phone in the hall, and called up the information bureau at Grand Central. "Information," she requested, "please to inform me the one-ways fare to Oriopolis, Indiana."

II

"GO out there to live, Em? Why, kiddo, you're crazy! If New York aint good enough for you, mebbe we could try Paris."

"Now listen, Aggie," pleaded Em. "I've laid awake every night for a week on this proposition—"

"Oriopolis! My heavens, aint the name enough? What would a person do out there to amuse themself?"

"You're liable to have it brung home to you before long, Aggie, that there's other matters in life besides the high jinks. This dressmakin' confinement's tellin' on me. You said yourself I'm browner'n a French pastry, and lately all night long them surface cars rattles through my sleep. You're young now, and you got a come-back; but ten years from now—! D'you want to spend your whole life behind a eleven-dollar counter?"

"No, and I don't have to. There's always a couple o' boys hanging around that all I need to do is give 'em the high sign to make their attentions serious."

"Don't fool yourself, dear! I had 'em trailin' me the same way five years ago. But they don't marry girls like us. That fly chorus boy's just playin' you for a meal-ticket; and Mr. Stimmel's got his regular friend he takes out every other Sunday, with her father in the retail shoe business. If I should get took down on your hands, with the rent cut off from Aunt Em's place, and all, what'd we come to?" Em nipped a budding tear with her napkin.

"My Gawd, Em, you aint sick, are you—something chronic, or organic, or fatal, that you've been concealing from me?"

"Nothing immediately alarming, dear.

I wont say 't I'm sick, and I can't say 't I'm well. I know them things 're silly; but it's been stickin' in my head what that there Madame Flora told me that I went to last year: I give her a dollar, and she says I got a strawberry-mark on my shoulder, I refused three proposals, I'm goin' on a long journey, and she hates to tell me but it looks like I'm elected for a early grave, unless— And then her control left her. She says mebbe, if she could get it back again, she could find neutralizin' influences; but I didn't have another dollar on me, and—"

"Nonsense, Em, you're superstiouser'n a Georgia moke! How'd we be any better off out there than we are here?"

"Why, we got the house to live in, and all o' Aunt Em's furniture; I can make gowns out there just as well as here; and I thought you could—er—set yourself up in millinery, or something."

"Em, those surface cars 've rattled a bolt loose somewhere in your bean. Why, out in the tank towns the women never heard o' the kind o' clothes you make. Give 'em a bolt o' blue serge and a adjustable dress-form, and they can rig out their whole family. A beaver hat for winter, and a chip straw for summer, with a bunch o' variety-store violets, is enough millinery to last 'em five years!"

"That's just where we come in: carryin' class to Oriopolis. Why, their ideas on style is something pathetic. Last week a poor creature from Urbana, Ohio, that's visitin' her brother's wife that's a plumber in Brooklyn, come in to me to make her a suit a yard around the bottom! And I just told her it's indecent—positively I wouldn't turn it out less'n three yards; what does she think I am? You got to run along now, honey, or you'll be ringin' in late. Some time this morning I'll just call up them moving people and ask 'em what'll it cost to crate your piano and the sewin'-machine."

"Great grief!" Aggie pushed back her breakfast plate and pounded her small fist on the table excitedly. "What do you want to do, work me up in the hysterics? Don't you dare call up those moving people! The only real excuse

you got for this fool project is you aint well; and I must say four o' them wheat biscuit and a boiled egg's pretty good diet for a invalid. You've took all the heart out o' me for my work to-day, and I don't want ever you should mention the subject again."

AGGIE jabbed on her hat and stamped off to work. Em sewed languidly awhile on the suit for the lady from Urbana. Then she called up a trunk-line railroad and inquired the freight rates to Indiana. She ate an orange for lunch and began figuring at the table on the back of a department-store slip. As the afternoon wore on, she wrapped a wet handkerchief about her forehead and sat looking out grimly at the street.

When Aggie returned for supper, she found no light in the room. Em lay motionless on the sofa. "Wake up, Em!" Aggie prodded her. "You're a hot one! No supper, and me tireder'n a dog."

But Emma did not stir. "Come on, Em, get up. What kind of a sketch is this!" She noticed the handkerchief. "If you had an honest-to-goodness headache this morning, why didn't you say so?"

No answer. "My Gawd, Em, you aint really sick, or faint, or anything!" The room seemed uncannily still. "Em! Em! Answer me!" She ran for the water-pitcher and doused it hysterically. A perfectly good silk waist ruined, and yet Em didn't move! Then Aggie went panicky and screamed. "Help, help! Help, somebody! My sister's fainted; she's dying—"

Em slowly lifted her lids and demanded weakly: "My goodness, who's callin' me? Why, it must be nearly time for Aggie, and I aint started supper. I—"

"You never mind about supper, Em. Just lie right still there. You—"

"Why, Aggie, hullo. I didn't hear you come in. I—I'm so dizzy, I—"

"There, honey, there, you just lie still. Aint you ashamed o' yourself, fainting away on me like this! For a minute I went clean dotty and grabbed up the pitcher. How long have you been here on the sofa?"

"Why, I dunno exactly. I was sittin' by the window and felt it comin' on, and I got here somehow before I flopped. You sure did give me a regular St. Regis bath. Go on away now, and quit rubbin' me. I'm goin' to get up in a minute and take off this waist."

SUPPER was a dismal meal. Em was gloomily cheerful about her symptoms. "A faintin' turn aint nothing to hold a inquest over, I guess—though also I had specks before my eyes, and that orange I et for luncheon nauseated me something terrible. Oh, I'll hold on a couple o' years yet, Aggie—"

"You quit that talk, Em! You just quit it. There aint nothing the matter with you except you're run down. You'd ought to take one o' those fall tonics that—"

"It aint no tonic out of a bottle'll do me any good: it's fresh air, and the sun on me, the muffler on this darned noise, and somebody in and out to neighbor with, that I want. I read in the Sunday paper once where a fresh reporter says New York aint a city—it's a disease. The gink was right; it's a disease, and I got it." Em slumped down wearily in her chair. "I can just shut my eyes now and see how cosy we was livin' on there up-State before Maw married her number three. There was a creek run past the house, a couple o' sycamores by the barn, and a old buggy under 'em that we used to jounce around in all day. When you was a baby still, I went out sewin' for the women around there, and they'd gimme ribbons and jam, or sometimes a quarter. And the last year I planted me a garden and had my own lettuce and reddishes on the table. Don't it sound kind o' nice to you, Aggie?"

"No nicer'n one o' those nasty radishes tastes!" Aggie dipped up a saucer of rice pudding and ate it soberly. "I suppose, Em, if you feel as though you got to get away from New York, we could close up this flat any time. I could hire me a room somewhere, and you could go out to that—Oriopolis dump, till you've rested up."

"Keep up two establishments! And have you eatin' around in them questionable table d'hôtes? I guess not! There's

only a couple of us left aboard this here De Volle ship, and Sister Emma's goin' to stand by the halyards till the old scow sinks."

Aggie pushed back her plate, went over to the piano, picked out the raggiest rag she could find, and ragged it over three times; then she came back to her sister. "Well, Em, I suppose I'll go out there with you, though I feel like I'm signing my death warrant to do it. If I get the horrors counting the pickets on the chicken-coop fence, you know who you've got to blame. As for the dope you're handing yourself about fancy dressmaking—"

"Don't worry, dearie. If I can't make them Oriopolis dames chiffons, I can make 'em calico: the woman that can't find plain sewin' to do anywheres, in the United States deserves to get the rheumatism in her thimble finger. Listen, there's the 'phone." Em got up. "I bet it's that poor fidget from Urbana. Prob'ly she thinks a person can turn out a regular *Maison* model overnight. I'll just give her to understand—"

"You sit down, Em. You're too weak to answer the 'phone, after the turn you've had."

"Were you expectin' a call?"—suspiciously.

"Well, I didn't know but Mr. St. Elmo—might, on his way to the show-shop."

"H'm, he'd ought to rent him a private line, the way he—"

"Honest, Em, I'm ashamed to tell him we're going out to the tamaracks. He sure will give us the laugh."

"Well, then," advised Em practically, "you better do it and have it over with. Also, you can convey him my compliments and say, if he wants any more o' them pimento sandwiches, he better get on the job next Sunday, because the first o' the month we're bustin' up housekeeping."

III

"WELL, o' course, Mrs. Schuhmire, the material's your own to do as you want to with; but it does seem like a cryin' shame to make up such elegant goods so inexpensive. It's all wrong,



William Dwyer

"A poor creature from Urbana, Ohio, that's visitin' her brother's wife that's a plumber in Brooklyn, come in to me to make her a suit a yard around the bottom! And I just told her, it's indecent—positively I wouldn't turn it out less'n three yards; what does she think I am?"

this idea you ladies in Oriopolis 've got that a woman has to dress like the mourners' bench after she's thirty-five. Why, in New York they figure they're just beginnin' to live, when their families 're growed up and off their hands. Just last week I turned out the loveliest afternoon gown for your friend Mrs. Spangler, and she says to me, 'Miss De Volle, I got the utmost confidence in your judgment. Absolutely, whatever you say, I'd wear it—even if it's a *jupe-culotte*.' O' course I look on dressmaking as an art rather than a business, and it's just like I always say to my trade, I'm only here to enhance the natural beauties o' the human form."

The robustious matron in the late Aunt Em's back parlor stirred receptively. "I suppose," she admitted, "a touch of pink in the girdle *would* liven me up a bit. I don't see why I should take a back seat to Ettie Spangler. Here's five dollars more I'll leave with you, Miss De Volle, for trimmings and extras. This is a real pretty little place you have," she commented, as she arose to go.

"Do you think so?" observed Em severely. "I feel more like I ought to apologize for it lookin' so ordinary; a person can't do much towards establishin' a home in two months, you know. I'll kindly ask you to step out this way—through my sister's millinery. A right swagger little shop she's got, aint it, Mrs. Schuhmire? She says she's only comin' out here for rest and a social time; but I told her it's a shame not to bring along a few o' her most exclusive models. Good-by, dearie. Come in Thursday for your fitting, and remember, I'm goin' to turn you out something with class and elegant lines like you've never even dreamt of."

Em banged the shop door and repaired triumphantly to the dining-room. "Supper ready, Aggie? Well, I guess to-day's poor! Two new customers, and I'm gettin' the bush-league aristocracy lashed right to the mast. That there elephant's-breath voile I made up for Mrs. Banker Spangler has brung Oriopolis to my feet. In the future, Aggie, I'm goin' to furnish my own trimmin's and findin's, because there's a harvest in

it. And I'll just ask that painter man to fix me up a new sign with 'Corsetière' on it. There aint nobody in Oriopolis can fit a straight-front; so I'll just write on to Tillie Luderus to round me up a job lot and appliqué 'em to these here bucolic queens at ten dollars a throw. My goodness, spinach out of a can, and jam, and biscuits—is that all you got for supper?"

Aggie broke one of her biscuits, despondently. "What's the matter with 'em?" she asked. "They're full o' holes."

Em took an experimental nibble. "Great heavens, they got enough bakin'-powder in 'em to raise the *Maine*! Aside from that, they're perfectly delicious. What did you find out? Is anything doin' on that tango opening?"

"I can have the lodge hall every Tuesday for five dollars, and all those girls I met at the hotel dinner Sunday are just crazy for me to start the class; but somehow, Em, I have a feeling that I'm not competent."

"Nonsense, what do these rubes know about the new steps? You're the best maxixer I ever seen, anyway. I don't know nothing much about dancing myself, but I bet you could take one o' them regular ones and put a extra kick in it or a couple o' measures o' half-time, call it the shrimp wiggle or the hippopotamus drag, and have the Indian sign all over Mrs. Vernon Castle and Terpsickery—or whoever was the original dame that started the Salome stuff!"

"Well," acquiesced Aggie, "we've got 'em guessing who we are, anyway. Yesterday I overheard a girl on the street say, 'Some people think they are stranded actresses, but Mamma says they have breeding written all over them.'"

"Mamma is right!" giggled Em. "It's just like I told you all the time, Aggie—things'd come our way. Aint you tickled to death we made the break?"

"Tickled," assented Aggie dryly, "but nothing like to a mortuary degree."

"Well, you ought to be. In New York we're only tadpoles in the ocean. Out here we're like them sea-lions they got in the Battery 'quarium: some splash in the main tank, and all the village lookin' over the rail!"

"But it's a tank, just the same, Em.

Oh, did I tell you I had a letter from Mr. St. Elmo to-day? He sends you his love, and—"

"Impudent! I got no use for it. You can send it right back to him. I suppose he's still with his show down East?"

"Yes, but—"

"I hope he stays there and minds his own business."

"They're working West, and what do you think, Em? A week from Monday they have a three-night stand in Toledo, and he says he's liable to run down and spend Sunday with us."

"What do I think! I think he better wait till we send him an invite."

"Why, Em, aint you ashamed o' yourself—an old friend o' the family like Eddie! Listen: somebody's knocking on the side porch."

"Let *me* go, dear." Em swept to the door with a cordial smile. "I'll bet it's Mr. Mumphrey."

SHE admitted a smiling young gentleman of uncertain age, capless and in a sweater. Costume and manner alike betrayed a considerable degree of acquaintance with the domicile De Volle. "Excuse me," he mannered. "I didn't know you were at supper."

"We aint; we're just through," simpered Em. "Sit down and make yourself neighborly. I was just remarkin' to Aggie, what have we done to Mr. Mumphrey? He haint been over in a long while. Here, have a piece o' this angel-food; and if you don't say it's the best you've ever et, we aint on social terms!"

"Oh, pshaw," grinned the young gentleman, "Mother says I'm over here all the time! I just thought I'd drop in and see if you didn't want me to fix up that potato-bin we were talking about the other night."

"Aint that sweet of you! But really, I don't think it's right, a person permittin' their friends to do such menial chores. I'll just hire me in a boy to do it."

"If you don't let me, I wont take another piece o' cake. And listen, I thought mebbe you'd like to go downtown to the movies awhile and then ride around a little in the car. Are you agreeable?"

"Well, I dunno," Em hesitated; "I done so much motoring in New York it seems like it's lost its original charm for me; but if you insist—"

"You needn't stay at home for me," interposed Aggie. "I'm going to practice some new songs, anyway."

"P'raps I'll go, then. And I'll come on along down cellar till you nail up that bin."

When the pair had disappeared below-stairs, Aggie stacked the supper dishes and reread the chorus boy's letter. She drifted over to the piano and set up opposition to Mr. Mumphrey's hammer-and-nail sonata below. But her new music lay unrolled. The tune she played was "Give My Regards to Broadway." "Only three weeks till I'll see Eddie!" she murmured. "And if Em'd lamp the invite I'm sending him, she'd blow up the works!"

IV

"HULLLO, Aggie; you're a sight for sore eyes! Emma, old dear, hullo!" Eddie St. Elmo deposited his grip on the parlor floor and greeted his old friends the sisters De Volle with warmth, not to mention abandon.

Aggie stripped him of his raincoat and lugged an easy-chair before the ornamental fire she had lighted in his honor. "Draw right up and make yourself at home. Welcome to Oriopolis! Honest, Eddie St. Elmo, I'm so blamed glad to see you I could fall onto your neck and hug you!"

"Same right back to you, baby doll! You got a hunch how I wanted to come, dropping in here at ten o'clock Sunday morning. I suppose I'm robbing you of your beauty-sleep, Aggie; and Emma'd ought to be off to her gospel-shop. I ask' a man on the train, don't we get to Oriopolis pretty soon, and how much of a town is it? And he just laughs. 'Town! Good Lord, it aint a town: it's that old sink-hole they drained the reservoir out of!' So I says to myself it sure must be some jimson jump; but really, it don't stack up so bad. There's a classy-looking picture house I came by. And a sassy little trick tried to flag me from the hotel dining-room. Though I

suppose you girls are about ready to gum-shoe back to the Big Street."

"You got another guess comin', Mr. St. Elmo!" Em hastened to inform him. "We wouldn't return to New York, neither me nor my sister, not if we was handed our carfare on a silver platter. Since we're out here, I'm enjoyin' health like I never imagined I could have; and Aggie's that popular with the boys, if she was to leave, they'd be holdin' suicide parties all over the village."

"How's everything with the show?" cut in Aggie.

"Rotten! We're hardly playing to salaries. And I've been having my usual bunch of hard luck. I was understudyin' the tenor, and last week he gets in an automobile smash-up. He was with a bunch o' souses comin' in from a keg party; the car turns turtle on 'em, and it's a terrible accident. But they pulled this darned gink out without a scratch on him; and now the manager says he's solid ivory—you can't hurt him, and what's the use o' carryin' a understudy? So I lost out my velvet, and honest, I'm so disgusted, for half a jitney, I'd blow the show."

"You don't want to do nothing like that!" advised Em. "If you aint back on time Monday night, they'll fine you something wicked."

"Why, Em, aint you ashamed, when Mr. St. Elmo's scarcely drew a breath in the house yet! Listen here, Eddie; don't you want a little nap before dinner?"

"Not me, girlie! I grabbed off a nice young snooze on the train. Just give me five minutes to wash up and change my collar, and we'll go out and look over the hamlet."

"Please to remember, Aggie," warned Em, "you aint goin' out without feedin' the poultry and peelin' me up them apples for sauce."

EM was left in charge of the dinner, while Aggie did the honors of the city. It was the hour when churchgoers were abroad, and many a humble Ori-

opolis mouth was agape at the elegant lady and gentleman who paraded slowly down Main Street.

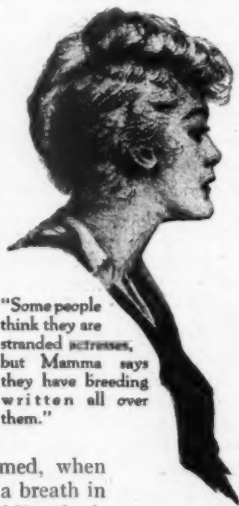
"Oh, lookie!" cried Eddie. "Beulah over there's got a stuffed pigeon on her bonnet! What's this, the band-stand? Gee, it's like old times back home, when us kids used to hang on the rail chewing ice-cream candy, while the village 'Symphony' took a fall out o' 'Hearts and Flowers' or the 'Blue Danube.' D'you really like it out here?"

"Yes," wavered Aggie, "and no. I can lie in bed till noon, if I want to. And the stage settings are lovely; but most of the time there aint nobody around to show their act."

"Don't let that worry you to-day, because I'm one regular little try-out kid. Some rag front your picture-house has got, aint it? No store-show about that! Hullo, the door's open. Let's go in and look over the boss."

"Why, Eddie St. Elmo!" giggled Aggie. "Don't, now. He'll think we're awful bold."

But Eddie was already disappearing into the Oriopolis Odeon. He introduced himself—as one professional to another—and in five minutes knew that the house counted up forty-eight dollars, ran six thousand feet of film to a show, and used a single vaudeville act a week. Likewise, the manager told him his troubles. "I'm just in here now lookin' if them young toughs from the barber-shop spit tobacco-juice all over the walls o' the box they had last night. It aint no cinch job, runnin' a movie house. I've been gettin' my vaudeville through a snide agent out in Chicago, and what do you think, the last three times hand-running he's sent me a dumb act! The people that are booked to open Monday, three times I telegraphed 'em, 'Rush photo's. Confirm,' and I aint heard nothing from 'em at all—until just now they answers, 'Nothing doing. Cancel. We're going on the Gus Sun time.' Them there



"Some people think they are stranded actresses, but Mamma says they have breeding written all over them."

unreliable show people, beggin' your pardon, Mr. St. Elmo, 're enough to turn a feller's hair gray."

"You've got my sympathy," tendered Eddie warmly, "though really you don't deserve it—bothering with tramp vaudeville acts in a nice, refined-looking house like this. What you want is a good, classy singer right on the premises, that can put over any number that comes their way and help fill up the place on their following."

"Well, I tried a couple. But the girl had one o' them tremulo voices that it seemed like she'd fall to pieces on the stage; and the boy was too homely to suit the patronage. It's the women makes my house pay, and they won't stand for no singer except he's a man, young and handsome, and with a voice that's the goods."

"See here, bo!" Eddie was suddenly inspired. "I've got an idea: I aint no Adonis, but I can put over any popular song that was ever wrote. I'm just visiting Miss De Volle, an old-time New York friend, while my show's laying off a week," — staccato wink at Aggie, — "and through favoritism, as I've been telling you, I aint got a very good part; so I don't care if I never see the whole outfit again, anyway. You being left like you are without an act, I'd be willing to do you a favor and go in the bill."

"Thanks," immediately congealed the manager, "but I'm not calculating to take any more chances with singers. Besides, I couldn't offer you the money—"

"Oh, that's all right," protested Eddie easily. "The first week I'm letting you name your own terms, till I make good and prove to you I'm what you want. O' course, in New York, I'm accustomed to twenty-five a week, and more on the road; but as long as I'm stopping here with friends and it's likely to prove a permanent position—"

"Permanent!" gasped the manager. "Who said anything about—"

"Oh, I know you're from Missouri! But you just come along to the house piano and I'll show you—"

"I aint got the time. I have to fetch my little girl from Sunday-school. Besides, I wouldn't consider—"

Eddie was doing a marathon down the

aisle. "Where's your light-switch?" he demanded blithely. "Never mind, Aggie. I'll sing him some o' them easy ones you can pick out in the dark." For the last ten minutes Aggie's features had been doing a series of studies in surprise; now she tried to register total inability. But Eddie wouldn't see it. "Come on, now, start her off—'He's a Rag Picker,'—and lots o' ginger in the vamp."

BEFORE the manager had recovered his vocabulary, Eddie had staged the "rag" number and a sentimental ballad; and just to prove he was also there with the highbrow stuff, he topped off with "I Hear You Calling Me." "Well, Stevie," he demanded, leaping over the foot's, "do I get the hook or billing for a kid Caruso?"

The local *entrepreneur* was plainly impressed. "You certainly are there with the holler," he conceded, "but—"

One *but* was a small matter to Eddie. In ten minutes he could talk away a dozen. When he and Aggie emerged from the Odeon, he called back gayly: "It's all right, bo. Those terms are satisfactory. You can go ahead with the billing. Play 'er up strong: 'Engagement extraordinary, Mr. Eddie St. Elmo, late juvenile with the "Spoony-Mooners" company, in a select repertoire o' popular numbers!' To-morrow we'll put it in a contract and I'll be around and talk over any other little arrangements that comes up."

Aggie was still somewhat dazed. "Why, Eddie St. Elmo, I bet you don't realize what you've done, jumping your show! And getting away with it that you're the juvenile o' the company, when—"

"Well, every guy's a juvenile in the profession, aint he, till he's forty? And who can deny I've been out with the 'Spoony-Mooners?' You don't understand nothing about arithmetic, Aggie. Two and two makes five, if you put 'em together right."

"Wont Em carry on? It'll be a circus when we tell her!"

Eddie pressed her arm mysteriously. "Girlie," he said, "we aint a-going to tell her till after supper, because this



"Settle down?" demanded Em
on? I'm obliged to tell you, Mr.
and anybody that climbs aboard



sternly. "What's he got to settle down
St. Elmo, I'm captain o' this here boat,
has certainly got to work their passage."

William van Dresser

afternoon we'll take another walk, and I got something else I want to spring."

In spite of her prejudices against "the profession," Em set out a first-class dinner. She took little part in the table conversation, however, and immediately after dessert retired to her davenport with a novel. "I'm at a terrible interestin' place," she announced, "—page two-ninety-seven, where the heroine's marooned in a ocean cave, the tide's comin' in, and *Egbert De Vigny's* preparin' to swing himself down over the cliffs to her rescue. I'm goin' to lay right down here and read till I find how it turns out; and you kids can do the dishes, or leave 'em, just as you've a mind to."

THE guilty pair left the dishes and spent the afternoon in the waterworks park. It was dusk when they returned. Em had spread the table with a lunch-cloth and was lighting her chafing-dish lamp. "You two are a lovely lot!" she greeted. "On the hike all day. I should think you might 've showed up in time to help me—"

"Oh, can the grouch!" cried Aggie. "We've got something to tell you." She made a dramatic pause and looked her sister joyously in the eye. "To-day I'm the happiest girl in America. Em, me and Eddie are going to take the plunge."

"Plunge!" echoed Em. A cold chill of apprehension shivered down her spine. "Into what?"

"Matrimony."

"Well, what in the—! Aggie De Volle, what kind of a joke is this?"

"No joke at all, old dear! I'm the happy bridegroom, and I ask your blessing—"

"This here sure is a heart-punch for me." Em held up a majestic hand for silence. "I been my own dupe. I might have knowed it from the frequency o' the letters you been exchangin'. All I got to observe to you, Mr. St. Elmo, is that you'd have done the whole De Volle family a favor if you'd have stayed with that 'Moony-Spooners' show where you belonged. And I must say, Aggie, I don't think much o' the unfeelin' manner in which you abandon the only relation you have in the world less'n two months

after we're settled down in this dear home." Em fished for her handkerchief and stanchd a gushing tear.

"Turn off the fountain, Em! I aint going to abandon you. Instead o' that, we're going to take Eddie right in the family. He's given me his word he'll pass up the stage for good. For the last couple o' years, he says, the show business has been telling on him, and he's just hankering for a chance to go into family life and settle down."

"Settle down?" demanded Em sternly. "What's he got to settle down on? I'm obliged to tell you, Mr. St. Elmo, I'm captain o' this here boat, and anybody that climbs aboard has certainly got to work their passage."

"Right-o, boss!" caroled the new brother-in-law. "And little Eddie's there with the epaulets! Less'n ten hours in town, Emma, and already I'm connected up with the pay-roll. Tell her, Aggie—I don't think she'll believe it from me."

Aggie told her. "Well, you must have hypnotized the poor gink into it; and prob'ly, soon as he comes to, he'll cancel you."

"Also," Aggie reinforced, "we've been talking the situation over, and Eddie sees a elegant prospect for a business opening to occupy him in the daytime."

"You bet you, Emma! Gimme six weeks and I'll be pulling a hundred bucks a month out o' this burg. Refined poolroom is the idea, girly, with a cigar-store, and mebbe baths and massage, if I get 'em coming. Aggie says now there's only two mangy billiard-tables in the hotel, and no decent place downtown for the boys to hang out nights."

"I must say, Aggie, you know a lot about matters that don't usually concern a lady! Poolrooms aint so easy opened, Mr. St. Elmo; and they're easier closed. If you folks think you're goin' to play up Sister Emma for a financial sucker on this deal—"

"Nothing like it, old dear," chuckled Eddie. "I'm coming aboard your old boat with eight hundred little iron men salted away that there's no mortgage on. I guess that's enough for a starter to—"

"Why, Eddie St. Elmo!" gasped Em. "Eight hundred bucks—!"

"He has: I saw it in his bank-book," defended Aggie.

Here indeed was news of good import. Em's forbidding frown smoothed itself out slowly as she capitulated to the happy fiancé. "Well, Mr. St. Elmo, I'm goin' to come under the wire gracefully, though I think the way this whole business has been pulled off is highly clandestine and improper. If my consent had been ask', which it wasn't, I aint at all sure this little connubial party'd be put through. Nothing personal, only you know the inherent prejudice I have toward the theatrical profession. But, now the damage is done, here's my hand on it, and I hope we'll always get along agreeable under the same roof. I must say I aint never observed you doin' nothing ungentlemanly, swearin' in the presence of ladies, or leavin' cigar-butts in the potted palms, and I warn you, don't start nothing like it now. It's plain to be seen I'm *de trop* here; so, if you two'll just excuse me, I'll go on upstairs and attend to my own knittin'."

The door closed with a bang. Aggie turned deprecatingly to her future lord and master. "I hope you wont mind Em appearing so brusque, Eddie. Her heart's eighteen-carat, though it seems like she aint never happy unless she's pretending she's standing out on something. You going to send 'em word, dear, that you're quitting the show?"

Eddie enfolded her rapturously. "Under the circumstances, baby doll, it aint necessary, because they're closing Saturday night in Fort Wayne."

UPSTAIRS Em slipped into a negligee and collected her disheveled faculties. "I suppose the whole affair's a judgment on me for fakin' that faint-

ing sketch on Aggie to kid her out here. If I'd only had another dollar for Madame Flora to get her control back, she might have found neutralizin' influences that'd have sidestepped Eddie entirely. To think o' that little bare-faced boy havin' eight hundred bones stacked away! Well, he'll be a handsome article o' furniture, and there aint no danger o' his desertin' Aggie as long as I keep him close to the big eats. Soon as I jolly myself along a little, I suppose I'll see it like it's all for the best.

"Just pipe my lollin' here, under my own roof," she philosophized, "in the luxury of a countess, with a dozen selected hens layin' Plymouth Rock eggs in my own back yard, and a perfectly elegant dressmakin' business ready-made to fall into—when six months ago I was payin' fifty-nine cents for butter, sewin' on my nerves and black coffee, and scared into perpetual insomnia for fear Aggie'd go on the stage or elope with a taxi-driver! There's thousands o' poor, frazzed-out women in New York I wish I could write it back to that they all got their own Oriopolis waitin' for 'em somewhere, if they only have their nerve to hop on a train and connect with it."

Em sighed comfortably, unclasped her necklace and stared absently out the window at the house across the road. There was a light in an upper room. She got up modestly and lowered the shade. "I guess I could start something downstairs," she mused, "if it was suspected I was out motorin' all afternoon with Mr. Mumphrey! He certainly is a nice boy, and one o' these days when I get him trained up so he'll quit wrigglin' in a three-inch collar and recognize Lyon-naise potatoes on sight, I'm goin' to pull off a little clandestine stunt o' my own!"



The Hero

By
Edwin
L. Sabin

A story of that boy Percy, with whom the author delighted us in "The Miracle" and "Better Babies."



ILLUSTRATED BY
B. CORY KILVERT

IF Seth Roberts' jitney 'bus had not set the pace, probably this venture of Percy's might not have occurred, although there is no saying what progressive boys in search of new ways and means may not invent. However, Seth had introduced the jitney; other jitneys were springing up like wildfire; and Percy's town bid fair to stay in the front rank of towns, as ever.

A "jitney," you understand, is a private automobile turned to profit as a public carrier. It scampers through the streets, taking on passengers at five cents apiece, to be deposited (the passengers, that is) wherever they wish along its route. *Jitney* is slang for *nickel*.

Mr. Roberts had been out to the California fairs, and in Los Angeles he had been impressed with the hundreds of automobiles, bearing signs, and dashing hither-thither, loaded with passengers at five cents each. Think of that!

The scheme seemed to have spread all through California; yes, and on his way home Seth had encountered it in Salt Lake City and Denver. So he had enthusiastically put a cloth sign on his

own car, which was a dingy rattletrap, and for five cents—one "jitney"—he was carrying people between the cemetery and downtown, a full mile. Almost anybody would pay five cents for the fun of riding in an automobile, even Seth's; and in spite of the competition which had countered on him, from rivals, he was reputed to be making a tremendous amount of money—sometimes three dollars a day! The route lay past Percy's premises, and with envy directed toward both driver and passengers, Percy could observe the frequent staccato flight of the Roberts "jitney."

Now from the station of her darning basket, by the opened sitting-room window, the voice of Percy's mother sounded, inflexible and admonitory.

"Percy?"

She was watching him—watchful of him, rather; and by intuition she knew exactly when to look.

"Percy? Remember, you are to do it all, rake the whole front yard, and not let baby sister get into mischief."

"All of it?"

"All of it."

"Aw—the dickens!" The "Aw!" was

true to form, but "the dickens!" tapered off with due regard to consequences.

How disgusting to be thus doubly enslaved, linked to a front yard and a baby sister, at the same time! The sky was peacefully blue; the air was gently sweet; the sun genially lavished his store of golden warmth. An errant woodpecker proclaimed his free-lance privileges by pertly drumming upon the dead limb of a soft maple, thereby deriding sundry staccato thumps below, where stave met carpet. These latter thumps were discordant notes in the atmosphere of a perfect early June. They implied labor. However, they were the thumps of the colored man over at Mrs. Davis', and he made a regular vocation of beating carpets. Above that, his soul did not rise.

Percy, with all the aspirations and inspirations of a young June trysting in his eager breast, felt himself to be the one serf amidst the buoyant landscape.

An oriole, orange and black, flashed from branch to branch; to mark him Percy had paused merely for an instant, deliciously leaning upon the rake-handle—and his mother's voice had rushed in to disconcert his effort at nature-study.

The front yard was wide, the rake pitifully narrow. And yonder, upon the walk, amid the hopeless expanse, sat like an old man of the sea (barring gender), baby sister, with deviltry in her mind. How can a fellow rake and watch a baby sister too?

"Percy? Percy?"

"Yes'm."

"What are you doing? And see Sister! Quick, or she'll be all over dirt!"

Oh, sister, sister! Off the walk again, of course, and crawling with unerring sense of direction for the softest, mud-diast spot! Percy ruthlessly restored her to position; whereat she cried—but no less was to be expected.



"You'll break down, or may be you'll blow up."

—K—

Now arrived a diversion. With clatter and shout, a portentous vehicle bore down the echoing street, but obligingly halted opposite Percy's prison limits.

"Hello."

"Hello, Spot. Where'd you get it?"

"Made it," succinctly informed Spotty, with professional air disembarking by stepping aside, ostensibly in order to examine axle and transmission.

Here was something doing! Percy seized upon the opportunity momentarily to forget domestic drudgery.

"You didn't either, did you?"

"Sure."

It was a remarkable contrivance—a longish, low body, which looked as though it might have been strictly hand-made (thereby bearing out Spot's contention), on four wheels

evidently taken from one of the Spotty's defunct baby carriages of bygone style. Spot sat in front, and by vigorously working an upright lever back and forth, turned the crank-shaft which transmitted power to the front axle. Behind him was ensconced in state his baby sister—that overgrown semi-infant whom Spotty was always making to bawl. The prow was an ancient kerosene can, which with its conical snout gave a fetching racer effect to the ensemble. Spotty had painted a big "No. 1" on its sides.

"Gimme a ride, will you, Spot?" proposed Percy, out of secret envy.

"G'wan!" rebuked Spot, gruffly. "I'm Barney Oldfield, and this here's my mechanic. This aint no jitney 'bus. Can't nobody ride but my baby sister. We're a racing team—see?" And with that, and a honk on a vocal horn, having re-seated himself, he figuratively threw into first, let in the clutch, and by no great apparent effort trundled away.

Percy gazed after with some awe. Spotty had sprung one on them all. This was far superior to wheeling

"baby" staidly in a go-cart. Why, this make-believe lent romance to that most prosaic of chores; it combined pleasure with duty, and spiced the flat routine of family cares. Why couldn't he, Percy, invent such an apparatus? And a jitney 'bus! Why, a jitney 'bus! He could go into the business of jitneying—hauling the kids and their babies, the same way the regular automobiles hauled grown people for a nickel! Almost any kid would pay a penny for a ride. He bet that he could make a lot of money; and besides, he could ride all around town himself, as easy as pie, taking baby with him! The great scheme loomed larger and larger.

"Percy?"

Shucks, couldn't he think for a minute?

"Percy!"

The change from query to exclamation brooked no delay in an answer.

"Yes ma'am."

"Why aren't you raking? Don't you know it's nearly ten o'clock?"

"Do I have to rake it all to-day?"

"You know you do. If you'd have kept at it, you'd be done by now."

"If I work hard till noon, can I get off all the afternoon?"

"If you finish the yard, dear."

Percy worked. As he worked, his scheme loomed larger and larger. There was that old wagon which one propelled by pedaling through a hole under the seat. It had been a foolish thing and he had discarded it long ago as unbecoming to a youth of his years. However, he rather thought that the pedal mechanism was serviceable yet. The wheels were awful small,

and two were busted; but Fatty had a pair of high wheels from a scrapped perambulator, and he might be wheedled out of them. And he bet with himself that he could get a big kerosene can from the grocer—a can bigger than Spot's, and painted red. Why, before he had finished that yard, he had his 'bus completed and was making ten cents a day regularly, besides solving the baby problem with innumerable rides.

Fatty proved suspicious and obdurate.

"What do you want of 'em?" he demanded.

"Oh, just to make something with. They're no good to you, Fat."

"They are too. I can use 'em, some time."

"You can't either," protested Percy.

"I'll give you fifteen cents for 'em."

This decided Fatty.

"No, you wont. I wont sell 'em. I wont sell 'em for less than a dollar, anyhow. My father wont let me sell 'em."

How provoking! But what else could be expected from a fat boy? Well, there was Hen. The baby at Hen's house was too new to have discarded anything in the shape of wheels. However, Hen did possess a pair of ancient velocipede wheels, iron-tired (whereas the peram-



"Made it," succinctly informed Spotty.



"No, you can't. You aren't a jitney, and I am!"

bulator wheels were rubber-tired), but not so bad, after all.

Hen also refused to sell. The market on wheels had suddenly tightened. This put Percy in somewhat of a hole, until he discovered wheels at the bicycle repair shop. These likewise were iron-tired, and moreover they were plainly out of true, although the repair man said that did not matter much. Percy could have them for twenty cents—ten cents apiece. This exceeded his bank account by five cents and put him in debt to his mother. Still, she was a lenient creditor, and he faithfully promised to repay her by extra labor.

Now he was feverish with zeal. The 'bus grew apace, out of material commanded here and there about the premises. Percy's father even lent efficient aid, and Percy once heard him and Mother exchanging gratified comments on his, Percy's, smartness.

"That boy's liable to be quite a mechanic," quoth Father.

"I'm so glad to have him take an interest in tools," quoth Mother. "It keeps him out of mischief, for one thing."

The concluding remark was a needless innuendo, but the praise foregoing was sincere enough to cover. The fly in the ointment was the attitude of Hen and Fatty, whom the sound of hammering and sawing seemed to have curiously attracted.

"Aw, what you going to do with that?" demanded Fatty, hands superciliously in pockets.

"You wait and see," retorted Percy. "I can take my baby sister out in this, and I can make a lot of money with it, too."

Hen also derided with faint praise; and after that he and Fat mysteriously held themselves aloof. As for Spotty, he trundled gloriously about, secure in his own prowess, his little sister riding behind him.

The grocery man, who desired the family trade, did contribute a kerosene can, of previous five-gallon capacity, and red, albeit battered. With this firmly attached to the prow, and a huge "No. 11" painted upon either side, the Percy 'bus might be pronounced finished. It had a very rakish look: the driver sat with his feet upon the pedals,

and his hands upon the steering wheel (itself a remnant of the old go-cart), which by means of a rope and pulley slanted the axle in one direction or the other, and thus guided the car.

That was a proud moment when Percy issued for his preliminary canter—Mother solicitously watching.

"Be careful, dear," she called.

With an amazing and most gratifying clatter, Percy speeded down the street, working his feet vigorously. Pedestrians paused and gazed. A jitney—a regular jitney, bearing the cloth sign, "DOWNTOWN, 5 CENTS"—passed him; but he did not mind that, for his own proud vehicle bore the pungent proclamation, "FARE, 1 CENT."

He rounded the corner, beyond which he might confidently count upon fetching an astonished hail from Hen's yard. Hen's yard received him with silence broken by only his own rampant progress. However, farther on before, he sighted possible fares: two girls, one of whom was Laurette Wilson—and he confessed a sneaking fondness for Laurette. But business must take precedence over sentimentality, and he still owed a nickel on his machine.

Laurette and her friend (who proved to be a pleasing fairy unknown to Percy) were wending a hop-skip-jump way along the sidewalk, but lapsed into decorum when he rattled to the curb and pulled short.

"Want a ride?" gruffly demanded Percy, without formality. "Take you for a cent."

The unknown fairy distinctly bridled, but Laurette was interested.

"Whose is it?" she asked.

"Mine."

"Did you make it?"

"Uh-huh. Want to ride? It's a jitney."

"'Fare, one cent,'" tittered the unknown, superciliously. "Who's going to pay a cent to ride in that old thing?"



"Soon as I can earn enough, I'll get a better one," announced Percy. "Anyhow, it's easier than walking. You sit there, and I'll take you wherever you like. That's what it's for—a jitney."

"How far?" bargained Laurette, much more considerate toward genius. "Downtown?"

"Aw, no!" protested Percy, alarmed. "I can't go 'way there. I got to stay 'round home. But I'll take you two blocks. It's two blocks for a cent."

"Doesn't say so," informed Laurette, referring to the placard. "We don't care, though. We aren't going downtown."

"And wouldn't go in that thing if we were," added the cruel unknown. "Come on, Laurette. We've got something better to do than standing talking with a boy."

Laurette, who possessed the spirit of venture, lingered.

"We're going down to the grocery," she said, tentatively. "You couldn't take us both, anyway."

"Yes, I can. I'll take you both for a cent," proffered Percy, catching at the idea. "I'll take one and then I'll fly back and get the other—and I'll carry your bundles, too, if you have any. I'll carry 'em back this far for you."

"Haven't got a cent. Wouldn't give it to you if we had," chanted the unknown. "Come on, Laurette. What's the use of fooling with him?"

"I'll trust you for the cent. I'd just as lief," attempted Percy, gallantly—but even then he might have lost the fare had not a commotion louder than any that he had made, sounded up the street. They all turned, to gaze.

WITH rapid, tinny bark and raspy grind, mingled with many rattles, a new vehicle came coursing over the pave. Twice it halted, while a familiar figure disembarked to make adjustment, whereafter it resumed its strident approach. The familiar figure was that of Fatty—figure unmistakable. The companion figure, seated at the front, proved to be that of Hen, driver. Here, then, was

a real automobile, with all of its mechanism exposed and otherwise much in evidence.

Hen and Fatty had mounted a second- or tenth-hand motorcycle engine, coupled it by a belt drive to the rear hub, improvised a wooden chassis and a tandem body—and here they were, after their late aloofness. They arrived with one cylinder of the two shooting, and halted (Hen braking with his feet) while Fatty again adjusted the belt which had slipped off.

Hen grinned, surveying the spectators.

"Hello," he greeted, impartially. "Where you going?"

"No place," asserted Laurette.

"Give me a ride?" boldly suggested the fair unknown, with that perverseness of the sex which is so annoying.

Percy felt his heart sink.

"Naw!" he reminded. "I offered to take you. I was here first. This is my jitney route."

"Who made that—you?" was asking Laurette, of Hen.

"Fatty and me together."

"Give me a ride?" repeated the fair unknown.

Fat lifted his face, having toilsomely readjusted the belt on the rear hub.

"Ride you for two cents," he informed, with shrewd calculation, taking note of Percy's sign.

Percy flew to arms. This seemed to be unfair competition.

"No, you can't," he cried. "You aren't a jitney, and I am. This is my street, anyhow, and you can go on some other street and get your own passengers."

"You chase yourself!" reproved Fat. "You can't get anybody to ride in that thing of yours, anyhow. Gee, chargin' a cent, to ride in that thing!"

"I should say!" agreed Hen.

"I think you're awful smart to have made an automobile," declared the fair unknown, to Hen and Fatty. "But I should think you'd take girls out for nothing. I wouldn't ride in that cart of his, though." And she pointed scornful chin at Percy.

"Oh, get out!" yelled Fatty—who was very "close" in his methods. "We

can't afford to take people for nothin'. This machine cost money, and 'taint all paid for yet. We're going to pay for it by hauling."

Nobody appeared to care that Percy was in debt, himself.

"'Twont run, anyhow," he asserted. "It stops every ten feet. And your engine's no good. She misses; I heard her."

"We'll show you," exclaimed Hen, fired by the slam. "Start her off, Fat."

Fat gave a long shove—the spark caught one cylinder—she barked—he vaulted aboard—and the belt slipped off.

"Aw, shucks!" deplored Hen, chagrined.

Percy yodeled derision, and the fair unknown giggled gayly.

"Here, lemme run it," ordered Fat, flustered, of the helmsman. "You don't know how; you're always making the



— B. COON MURRAY —

"Gee, chargin' a cent to ride in that thing!"

belt slip off. It's mostly mine, anyway." He eagerly replaced the belt, and substituted himself for the crestfallen Hen. "I'll take one of you, if you want to ride," he bluffly invited, to the two girls. "But I won't take you far. This aint no free 'bus, and after this you'll have to pay."

"You go," giggled the fair unknown, to Laurette.

But Laurette (bless her heart!) was stanch, and her words sent a warm glow through the perturbed and indignant Percy.

"No," she said, tilting her chin also. "If I ride with anybody, I'll ride with Percy. He asked us. I'm afraid of that machine. I'm not afraid of his, though."

"I'll take you down to the store and back," gratefully proffered Percy. "And those other folks can go to the dickens, can't they!"

"We'll beat you," challenged Fat. "We'll beat you a mile."

"You'll break down," retorted Laurette, "or maybe you'll blow up."

But Percy did not pause to join in the exchange of compliments. Laurette was seated, and he began to pedal. He felt that her confidence in himself and his vehicle must be justified. His 'bus might be of the plain and despised variety; on the other hand it was safe and sure, and deserving of patronage. Away he rattled, literally and figuratively putting his best foot forward. Behind him he heard menacing bark and clatter, as Fat also got under way—and then there was a

sudden cessation, the gap filled in by Fat's excited and angry implorations, as if the belt were off once more.

Faster Percy shuttled his feet, revolving the crank-shaft; the pave and curb spun past, and he could scarcely keep his soles on the pedals. Now the Fatty machine was in hot pursuit—it clattered by, barking intermittently, with Hen panting after. The fair unknown, its passenger, waved mocking hand. In their desperation Percy's feet momentarily lost the pedals and well-nigh threw him overboard; with an effort he regained them.

"We don't care," soothed the faithful Laurette, referring to the Fatty flight.



Laurette screamed and was catapulted over his head.

"We're going as fast as we want to. Oh, goody! They've broken down again."

So "they" had, for the belt was off. Hen labored frantically to restore it.

"Tisn't fair, anyway," volunteered Laurette. "They're two to our one."

"Well, maybe we'll beat, just the same," gasped Percy, through his clenched teeth.

"You must be awful strong in your legs," praised Laurette. "Aren't you tired?"

"Uh-uh," denied Percy, aching in both calves. He would do or die, for Laurette.

Barking again, the Fatty machine, in the advance, dipped over the little hill. Welcoming the aid of the slope, Percy pedaled after. The grocery store was down at the bottom; he rather guessed that the Fatty machine would beat them, but he would arrive a good second. Now his feet had lost the pedals altogether; the wind whistled in his ears; his pace (as it seemed to him) was terrific; and he hung hard. Laurette fairly shouted, again.

"They've busted!" she cried. "Goody, goody! Maybe we'll beat. Oh, hurry!"

Percy already was hurrying; the revolutions of his good wheels were at their limit. Before, the Fatty machine was in trouble. It was stalled! The belt this time was off for sure, and moreover it was entangled in the wheel, locking the same. Fatty was adjuring, while Hen frantically worked, in inconsiderate fashion shoving the machine, broadside to, hither-thither across the track. Peril threatened.

"Look out!" shrieked Laurette. "We're coming!"

"Look out, darn you!" yelled Percy, distraught at the obstruction.

Drat Hen and Fatty! Didn't they have any sense? He hauled hard at his steering wheel, to scoot across the street—and the rope broke. To his horror, he was going free, straight for collision—he had no space now, to pass; the curb

was near. There was only the one thing to do: out darted his feet, as a drag; he swerved, and with a crash he rammed the curb. At the same instant he was very indignant.

Laurette screamed and was catapulted over his head while he was in mid-course of a companion somersault. He landed on the soft parking, and wasn't hurt—much—and she picked herself up almost as quick as he.

"Aw, what'd you do that for?" criticised Fatty. "You didn't have to. We didn't make you. Don't you know how to drive?"

"You did too," answered Percy, a catch in his voice—and he ruefully examined his precious 'bus.

It was gone—the front axle splintered and the chassis and body buckled double in the middle.

"We're broken too," claimed the fair unknown, conciliatory; but they paid scant attention to *her*.

"I'm not hurt a bit—are you?" panted Laurette, to Percy. "Is it broken, really, Percy?"

Percy nodded. The lump was in his throat. He realized that, financially, he was in rather a bad way, but he bluffed it out.

"I can make another," he said.

"Aw, you can't drive, anyhow," scoffed Fat, hastily, as if fearful lest a claim for damages might be put in. "Look at how you ran into the curb when you didn't have to."

Laurette rallied to the rescue.

"He can too," she asserted, with a little stamp of her foot. "And he did have to. He'd have run right over you and killed you all, if he didn't run into the curb. He's a hero."

And Percy, blushing, let it go at that. He had too much sense to explain about the breaking of his steering cable. He felt that he was quite capable of being a hero (for Laurette); and heroes have been made out of stuff far more tenuous than this.





"A little boy!" she repeated, as if she would impress upon her mind the working of a miracle.

The Scab

THE stories of Mrs. Mellett all have been characterized by great power, both in theme and telling. This one ranks with her best.

By Berthe Knatvold Mellett

Author of "A White Woman," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY M. LEONE BRACKER

YOU goin' let Tony Amato be bury like that? No band, no candles, no flags? Tony Amato, first man kill in the strike, bury like a scab? No! For Tony Amato you goin' make funeral like the city have never see before. Five hundred men and their wives and little kids walking behind Tony Amato while the band plays, shaking the ground so the rich tremble at the heavy feet of the workingman. That the stuff! That the funeral you goin' make for the first man kill in the smelter strike!"

Abruptly the speaker stopped, and leaping from the platform, was swallowed up in the humming turmoil of Slavonian Hall. For two weeks the smelter workers had been out on strike. For two weeks a meager, guarded crew of strike-breakers had fed the red furnaces under the hill, mocking the methods of the strikers, imperiling their hopes.

For two weeks they had suffered in impotent hate the armed deputies that in squads of three patrolled the steep and muddy streets of their settlement. Hunger had overtaken many of them; fear had stalked them all. And now one of their number was dead. A bullet, whizzing out of a gray obscurity of the dawn, had laid him low. Whence the bullet had come, they could not say. But Tony Amato was dead in his shanty up the hill, and stolid patience cried out that the end had come. Five hundred men they were, each man fibered like knitted steel, each one strengthened with a purpose that had no alternative but despair. Should the shot that brought down Tony

Amato be the signal for which each, secretly, half awaited?

Through the shifting, snarling crowd around him, the senior Babare fought his way to the platform.

"You want troubl'?" he shouted as he elbowed out his path. "What's matter? You want troubl'?"

Slavonian Hall was used to listening to the elder Babare, and now as he sprang from the floor to the platform, a sudden silence tightened the tension of the atmosphere.

"You want troubl'?" he demanded from his elevation. His eyes blazed out of his flat, swart face, and his compact body lurched forward as though poised for combat.

"A' right, you get troubl' that way. Go 'head. Have the big funeral and the band for Tony Amato. You know how you act when the band play and you march behind? I tell you how you act—like the crazy damn fool—"

A growl, low and sinister, broke in upon him, and the mob began to surge and swing again.

"Shut up!" he bawled above the hubbub. "Shut up, and listen to Babare! What you think you doing? Is it for Tony Amato you strike? No. Is it for less work and more money? For better things for the wives and kids? Yes! For Tony Amato you can be sorry—not fools! Tony Amato is one man. You strike for five hundred men. And you know what you need when you strike for five hundred men? You need to keep the head. You think you keep the head when you march behind Tony Amato and the band play and the women cry?

You bet you, no. You get crazy. After while somebody throw the stone—somebody hit the deputy—somebody shoot! Then you know what happen? Hell—and the milish called out!"

At the level of the men's belts where he panted for breath, Andrew Pete Babare, Jr., shot his little bullet head down into the hollow of his hunched-up shoulders and flung his weight upon the human wall intervening between himself and the door that gaped at the gray daylight beyond the fetid density of Slavonian Hall. Wriggling desperately in the thicket of legs where he had been forgotten, his dog Kubelik struggled to follow.

But Andrew Pete had forgotten his dog. He had to get away. He had to have air lest the fires of his shame consume him. In the hall his father's voice continued to cough out hoarse, unbelievable arguments. No band for Tony Amato! No uprising of outraged labor! No mourners whose grief could be witnessed in the brief ecstatic lurches of the hack! No army of workers rallying to avenge the fallen martyr of work!

Nosing against his master's hand, Kubelik announced his escape from the perils in which he had been left. Andrew Pete spread his fingers in an automatic caress that encompassed the whole cold muzzle. But his thoughts had no part in his action. His whole mind labored to grasp the incredible evidence of his ears. His father—his own father, whose class passion had been the butter on his daily bread—turned traitor—urging caution—backing down.

True, when Ladislaus Lastolich had waked them that morning with the news that Tony Amato had been shot, the soul of Andrew Pete had risen in violent, but brief, protest. He had calculated all along that the strike would end in bloodshed—be the red beginning of the great world-revolution, in all probability. But his calculations had never included an Italian dying the heroic death that all fitness surely reserved for an Austrian.

But almost as soon as it had come, race jealousy had been swallowed up in the greater issue, the Cause.

Out in the street the voice of the senior Babare barked with an insistence

and repetition that were unendurable. The Warsaw Grocery was across the street. Polacks! Comfort was not there! Below the hill the smelter belched lurid vapors into the fog. With all the intensity of his hot young heart he hated it, hated the atrocity of the tallest concrete smokestack in America, hated the long, grimed piers reaching like greedy fingers into the water beyond; the noxious smoke in the air; the gaunt board barricade behind which scabs drilled for their traitor's hire. Back there in the hall his father was shouting—shouting—

He shut his eyes and drew his forefingers into his ears. He would hear and see no more. Maybe to lie down in the mud and yell would help; maybe to go away and die of the shame of it all. Sometimes dogs stayed beside their dead masters and starved. He bet Kubelik—

Just then a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and the familiar grumbling voice of Ladislaus Lastolich penetrated to his eardrums.

"What's matter, kid? You like the guinney?"

"No, I should say not. No Caruso for me!"

"What's matter, then?"

Andrew Pete looked up at his father's ally with flaming eyes, and Ladislaus Lastolich read sufficient indictment there.

"You mad at Papa, eh?" he rumbled. "Maybe you don't know it all yet, kid. Maybe Papa know something too. Better you come back and hear some more."

Then, swinging the protesting youngster to his mighty shoulders, he stooped at the doorway and pushed back into the thick air of Slavonian Hall. The elder Babare was still on the platform. His voice was hoarser; his eyes were hotter. Around him, up on the platform and down in the hall, the mob snarled and swung like an angry tide. Babare, the leader, had lost control. He had preached caution to a bomb when the fuse was burning. On the shoulders of Ladislaus Lastolich, Andrew Pete saw into his father's face; he saw something there he had never seen before, something of the despair of the shepherd who finds his flock turned to a pack of wolves; he saw him fling out his arms,

the great hands like red knots at the extremities.

"Wait! I tell you something! Wait!"

The hoarse voice boomed out and stopped the surging mob at the door.

"You make me tell you, then. I think best not to tell, because it make you crazy. Now you crazy a'ready. A' right, now listen. When Ladislaus Lastolich and me find Tony Amato this morning in the brush, he wears his overalls, and beside him is his dinner-pail. What you think Tony Amato do before it is yet day, with overalls and dinner-pail? Eh? I tell you. Tony Amato sneaks back to the smelter to work for ten dollars the day to break the strike!"

A howl shook the puny timbers of Slavonian Hall. The mob that had halted at the door turned back, and on the shoulders of Ladislaus Lastolich, Andrew Pete raised menacing little fists in the air and howled with the rest.

Babare's voice was now a wheeze that cut through the turmoil like a saw.

"For ten dollars a day he would break the strike that we go back to work for two. How you like that to make a funeral for? How you know it is a deputy that shoots him? How you know but some striker sees what he does and shoots him like a dog? You know who shoots the bullet that kills him? No. I don't know. You don't know. Down at the smelter they do not know. All we know is that Tony Amato is the scab!"

Andrew Pete did not hear when his father's voice died in the noise of angry men rushing through the door. He did not know that astride the wide shoulders of Ladislaus Lastolich he was moving with the rest—out into the chill of the day—over the slipping clay of the hillside—up toward the dreary fringe of shanties beyond the settlement. He did not see that Kubelik leaped toward his dangling feet with shrill, astonished barks. Before his eyes was only the glare of anger. In his heart was only the fury of betrayal.

So, that was the truth about Tony Amato! Scab!

And this agent of industrial damnation had been shielded by the senior Babare!

Gradually external things began to

project their impressions into the hot murk of his mind. He became aware that the tide atop of which he rode was moving, and with a definite purpose. A shanty ahead distinguished itself from its fellows and stood out with strange familiarity. He had never viewed it from that altitude before. But it looked like the home of the kid with a mania for playing funerals—the one they called Corpsy Christopher, as the only version of the obvious nickname they could get by with in the neighborhood. Yep! There was the wet sand-pile where they had buried Corpsy a week before, at Corpsy's earnest solicitation. There was the very tin dipper-handle they had given him to breathe through during the "dust to dust" rites.

And now the mob was stopping at Corpsy's dismal dooryard. No one had ever inquired into Corpsy's other name, Corpsy Christopher seeming singularly sufficient. Maybe it was Amato! It surely looked like it might be. Something primitive and cruel leaped in Andrew Pete's breast, and ardor for the Cause merged luridly with the animality of pursuit.

Then a hush spread over the hard-breathing swarm, and some one on the outer ring called:

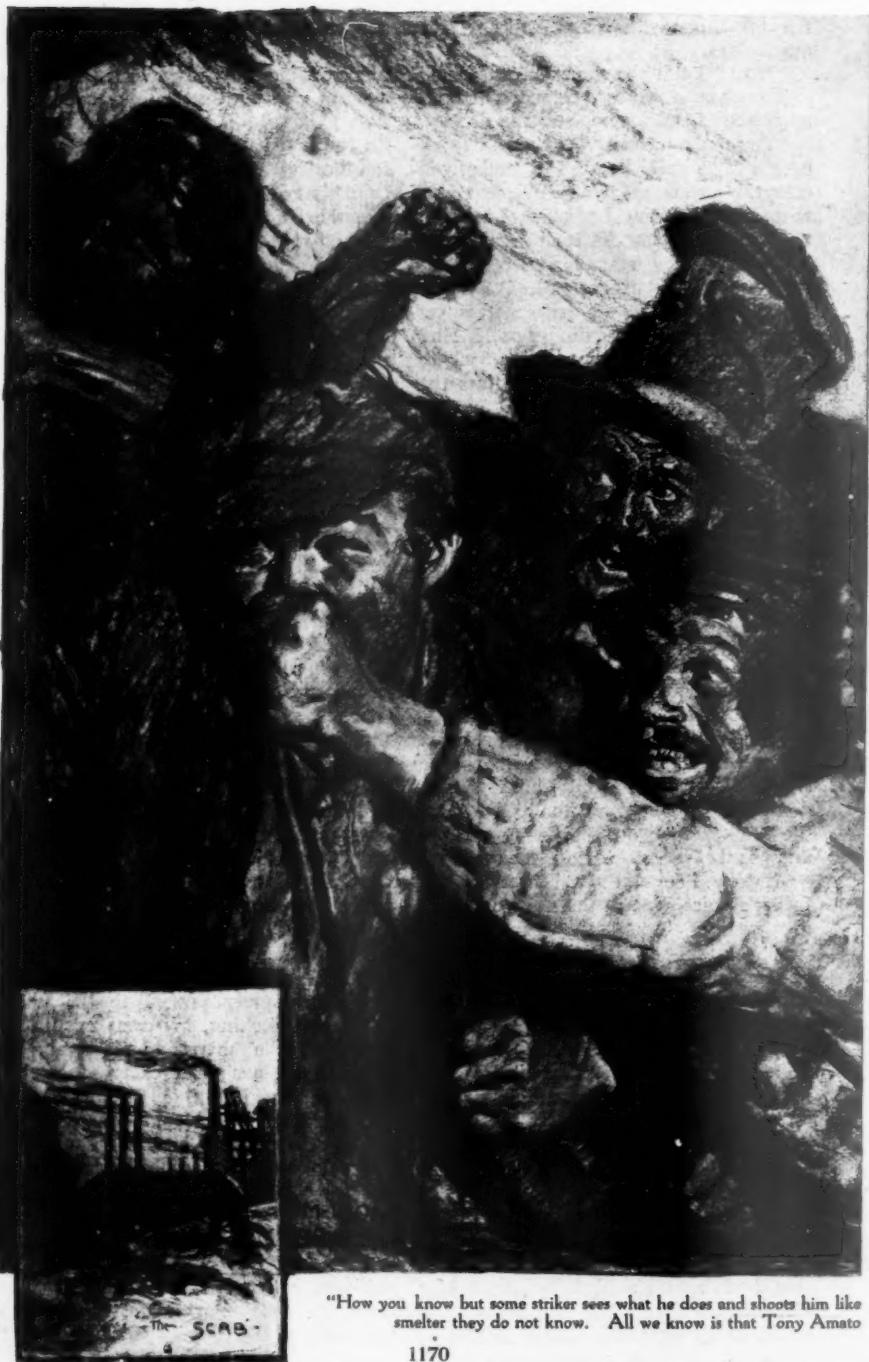
"Let Lastolich knock."

Andrew Pete felt himself retreat precipitately, and heard a heavy "Not much" grunted under him.

"Then I knock," the voice from the outer ring shouted again. "I drag the dago out! I let you see how the dead strike-breaker look! I shame the wife and the kid of the scab!"

The volunteer pushed to the front, his face twitching, his arms gesticulating. At the miserable doorstep, he turned, and a sinister cheer of encouragement urged him on. Something at once exultant and afraid crowded in the heart of Andrew Pete. A silence fell upon the mob as of a heavy breath held in suspense. Then the volunteer knocked.

There followed a pause; then again a knock, sharp and hollow. Again a stillness, and then a brutal shock as of a rough shoe shot against the flimsy paneling of the door.



"How you know but some striker sees what he does and shoots him like smelter they do not know. All we know is that Tony Amato



a dog? You know who shoots the bullet that kills him? No. I don't know. You don't know. Down at the is the scab!" Andrew Pete's father's voice died in the noise of angry men rushing through the door.

"Throw the damn' scab out the window for us to see!"

The voice was more unhallowed than the words. Andrew Pete felt the huge shoulders of Ladislaus Lastolich leave.

A little sound clicked on the listening silence. It was like some one blind, fumbling with a lock. Ladislaus Lastolich shifted uneasily, and Andrew Pete saw the miserable door opening until a blotched face showed through the crack. It was the face of a woman who had wept her features away.

"What you want?" she asked.

The man who had knocked stepped back and beckoned awkwardly for reinforcements from behind.

"What you want?" she questioned again, leaning wearily against the door.

The man of the heavy shoe cast a swift look behind him. His allies had shrunk back, leaving him unsupported. He dropped his eyes and answered:

"We come for Tony Amato."

"Tony Amato is—die," she said, and closed the door slowly, tiredly.

From his height, Andrew Pete looked toward the spokesman, and burning contempt almost swept the breath from his body. So this was the end of that fine headlong errand on which they had come. This was the way they avenged the Cause. A woman with swollen eyes showed her face at the door, and a hundred men—Austrians at that—backed down. Chicken-livered outfit! Where was their class strength? Didn't they remember that a woman should kill her husband before she saw him turn scab? Already they were going down the hill at twice the speed they had come up. That was what was the matter with the working class. There was no solidarity, no adherence to purpose. Out of the familiar propaganda, phrases enough flashed to his mind to shrivel up a world.

Andrew Pete kicked against the deep chest of Ladislaus Lastolich to indicate he was done with the disgraceful performance and wanted down. Ladislaus Lastolich seemed immersed in some stupendous preoccupation.

"If you aint goin' do nothin' about the guinney, I want down," Andrew Pete shrieked in the big red ear below.

There was no response.

"If you're goin' let the scab's wife get away with it, you can lemme down. Ladislaus Lastolich—lemme down!"

Still Ladislaus Lastolich lunged on, down the slipping clay of the hillside, apparently unconscious of the turbulence he carried on his back. Finding that shrieks and kicks were inadequate to convey his message, Andrew Pete thumped savagely at the soft hat so handy to his fists. Like a patient animal unburdening itself of a thankless parasite, Ladislaus Lastolich reached up and set the howling boy upon the ground.

As soon as the sole remaining adherent to principle felt the ground under his feet, he turned back. Tripping over the skirt of his long raincoat, kicking out at Kubelik, who wagged in agitated interest ahead, he flung himself up the muddy hill toward the shanty by the sand-pile.

For just a moment, at sight of the sand-pile, the flame of his purpose flickered. The showing-up he was about to inflict would be tough on Corpsy. But it was the Cause, not Corpsy, that was to be considered. More, because he stood alone, must he adhere to principle. A jumbled vision of himself kicking in the door and calling upon the neighbors to come and view the dead scab and the shame of the family, was in his mind. If they hadn't run too far, he would rally the craven mob retreating down the hill. Afterward there'd be a procession. And he'd march at the head of the line with a banner: "Labor's Enemy Laid Low," or something like that. His imagination reverted with a leap to a procession. Corpsy would have liked a funeral like they planned that morning at Slavonia Hall, before— It would only be just to add a sting to the shame of the scab's offspring by telling Corpsy what he'd missed by having a strike-breaker for a father.

The door was closed again, and Andrew Pete doubled his fist into a bludgeon and hammered on its shivering panel. There was no sound within. Bracing himself with his hand against the casing, he hauled back with one foot and swung forward with such vicious force that the whole unstable structure shook. Then, with his heart beating loud

in the ear he laid against the keyhole, he heard something stirring very softly within, as though the dead were rousing to his summons. He pulled his foot back for another kick. But the coarse little shoe hung for a moment in the air, and was then set softly down on the gunny-sack that answered for a mat.

The bolt slid back; the knob turned from the inside; and the blotched face of the woman who had wept appeared at the crack.

Something like a smile, like a far, numb smile,—as though the waxen Figure on the Cross had felt a warm breath of Heavenly comfort blow across Its mouth,—drifted from the lips to the swollen eyes of the woman.

"A little boy," she whispered, and before he understood what was happening, Andrew Pete felt his own tight fist inclosed in a clasp that, though hot with fever, was some way strangely comfortable.

"A little boy," she repeated as if she would impress upon her mind the working of a miracle. Then throwing the door wide, she dragged him in, Kubelik whimpering behind.

Settling back upon his heels, Andrew Pete dragged his hands from her grasp.

"Where's the—" he began. Then he felt the skin draw at the nape of his neck; a shudder overtook him; and with a howl he ducked his head into the warm skirt of the woman he had come to shame.

Under the crucifix on the wall, between the candles that yellowed dim circles of the squalor, something hideously misshapen lay shrouded beneath a sheet.

In the curtain of the skirt, Andrew Pete heard the woman moaning a kind of chant above him. Her hands were locked around his head, and she swayed in rhythm to her words.

"Little boy, little boy," she was saying. "Because I am alone there have come a little boy."

Her voice trailed off in a croon like the wail of a hired mourner.

"One wik 'go you have come to play in the sand with mine littly Christof'. One wik 'go—and now mine littly Christof' is gone."

Andrew Pete wrenched himself free

of her hands and raised a violent little face from cover. So! Corpsy Christopher had gone away, eh! Sent him somewheres so he'd be safe when this strike-breaking began! Other folks had all they could do getting food for their kids, let alone sending them on trips!

Back in a flood flowed the words he had come to say, and he backed for breath and declamatory room. But the thing under the sheet—and the pale candles in the litter of the room! He moved a little closer to the woman, and something big that swelled and swelled with an awful pain crowded the words in his throat.

"And now mine littly Christof' is gone," the woman went on moaning.

Suddenly under the staring eyes of Andrew Pete, the distorted something under the sheet resolved itself in order. The hideous unit divided and became two still figures laid side by side, one long and heavy and pathetic in the helplessness of its strength, and one small and sweet and strong in helplessness.

"Corpsy gone?" Andrew Pete whispered through chattering teeth.

"Mine littly Christof'—mine Tony—mine baby—mine man—both gone—" the woman moaned. She had sunk upon a chair, and with her hands locked in her lap sat rocking her body to and fro.

"Just one wik 'go you play at die with mine baby in the sand," she chanted.

"Sometime' I scold because he play at die. But he say to me, 'To play at live is to play ogly smoke to breathe, and ground where the grass will not grow, and the strike, and be hongry. But to play at die is to play the nice littly white wagon, and in the graveyard soft grass and flowers.' So I let him play at die. But now one wik 'go, he comes to me with wet sand on his clothes. His face is hot, and he laughs with bright eyes like one who is glad. 'Mamma,' he say, 'maybe I die.' I tell him no. I tell him for his mamma he must grow to the big man. I tell him bimeby the strike is over and Papa comes with money in the pocket. Then we have much to eat, and must open the door because in the stove the fire burns too hot. But mine baby look at me and say, 'Mamma, maybe I die.'"

She stopped, and Andrew Pete cast back desperately in his mind for his slipping purpose, for scathing denunciations, for something, anything, to stop the swelling pain in his throat. Kubelik, alert on his haunches, blinked at the candles and sniffed restlessly at the smell of death in the room. After a time she began again:

"All night me and Papa sit by our baby. He rolls and moans on the bed, and sits up to make us promise the littly white wagon when he shall die, and flowers and grass in the graveyard. And we promise, to make him still.

"Yesterday—he die."

She ceased rocking in her chair and sat stolid and upright, staring out of the swollen mask of her face, like Niobe done with tears.

"Corpsy—dead?" The words came from Andrew Pete's drawn little mouth less audible than a whisper. He stood away, awed by her desolation, reaching out toward Kubelik crouching behind him on the floor. The dead under their sheet were no stiller than the living.

On a table, back in the shadow, an alarm-clock clicked off the seconds.

"Yesterday he die," she began again.

"I put on my shawl to go and get the littly white wagon and the ground in the graveyard where the grass is soft. We have promise' our baby—and we must kip the promise to the dead. To the man I say we have nothing, but when the strike is over, then we pay. He say to me without the money there is only the long black wagon an' the ground on the hill where the other poor folks sleep. I come back to Tony. He sits where I have leave him—by our baby. He lifts his eyes to me, but I shake my head. We do not spik. What should we say? We have no money—that is all. For a long time Tony looks at me. We think the same thought, but we do not spik. At the smelter they pay ten dollars the day to break the strike. With ten dollars in the hand one could say to the man: 'To-morrow there comes another, and again to-morrow another. Bimeby the littly white wagon and the grave with the green grass is paid for.' It is so when one has money in the hand.

"All night we sit beside our baby, and

we do not spik. While yet it is dark I get for Tony the breakfast. He comes to eat. Then he takes the dinner-pail and stands for a long time at the bed looking down. Bimeby he goes out through the door.

"I sit down by the bed and wait.

"And after while—they bring my Tony back to me."

Into the thick sleeve of his raincoat, Andrew Pete was sobbing. Deep as she was in her own grief, the woman heard. She rose and gathered him to her breast, straining his body against her own.

"An' the funeral, an' the white hearse, an' the flowers—aint there goin' be none?" he asked between his sobs.

"From the County comes a man today. On the hill, he say, they will bury them. For two there will be one black wagon—"

"It aint right," sobbed Andrew Pete. "It aint right."

THE next day, skulking through alleys, hiding behind shacks and stone-piles to see it pass, and follow after, and see it pass again, a boy and a dog trailed a pauper's funeral. There was one black wagon drawn by a team of ancient grays, and behind it a woman walked and wrung her hands.

In and out of the angling streets, hiding from the eyes that shot their maledictions on the woman and the pitiful thing that lumbered through the mud, skirting wide of the corner where Ladislaus Lastolich leaned hugely against a pole, Andrew Pete and Kubelik worried their way to the edge of the smelter settlement, and beyond.

Up the hill in a district safe from accusing eyes, they cut across a lot, and stood backed against a stump, huddled together, waiting. A pair of ancient grays shambled around the corner. Andrew Pete laid a trembling hand on Kubelik's collar. For a moment he seemed to waver. Then with the bright light of determination in his eyes, he straightened himself, squared his husky little shoulders, and stepped out into the street.

And a woman and a boy and a dog followed the dingy wagon to the pauper's burying-ground.

A Complete Résumé of the Opening Chapters of Gilbert Parker's New Novel, "WILD YOUTH."

THE law of the love of youth for youth is the background of this latest novel by Sir Gilbert Parker. Immutable as the law of gravitation, he sets it forth, and paints in his men and women with the same broad, powerful sweep or delicate touches with which he pictures the Canada that he knows so well.

Louise Mazarine, a willowy slip of a girl, and Joel Mazarine, her husband, sixty-five—these are the violation of the law. Then comes Orlando Guise, a neighboring ranchman, and young. And the law begins to work as surely as gravitation pulls the falling apple to earth.

Joel Mazarine is a hard old calf-skinned man of the soil, who had buried two gray-haired wives before he saw Louise. She stands to him, first, as payment for a ten-thousand-dollar mortgage, and second, as the fulfillment of the belated hunger of a coarse manhood. He stands to her as a jailer, who gives her good food and care, and yet gives her nothing.

"Hell—that old whale and her!"

That's what Jonas Billings, the keeper of the livery stable, said when Joel Mazarine first brought his wife to Askatoon to live on the valuable ranch he had inherited there. And that's the opinion of all Askatoon.

The girl wife appears always in the company of her morose husband. Gruesome jealousy takes possession of Mazarine if her glance or word goes out without his sanction. This jail life saps the strength of the girl, and she falls ill.

The Young Doctor, beloved by all Askatoon, comes, and sees that what ails the girl is old age. But before he can help her as he plans, young Orlando Guise rides over to Mayo (the Mazarine ranch), to buy cattle from Mazarine.

Orlando Guise and his mother own one of the richest Askatoon ranches. And to the astonishment of everyone,—they only know Guise, or "Giggles," as he is called, by his dudish clothes and gay, laughing manner,—the ranch is steadily growing richer.

"Giggles" laughs even while he drives a hard bargain. He laughs this day till he sees Louise's face at the window, "pale, exquisite, delicate, with eyes that stare at him as though he were a creature from some other world."

Louise has heard a strange voice outside her window. It is a new kind of voice, lively and constantly breaking into little spells of inconsequent laughter. She wants to see who has such a voice. She moves cautiously to the window and looks into the merriest eyes she has ever seen—"and for the first time in all her life she is wholly alive."

THE young ranchman does as Joel has ordered, pays the six thousand dollars cattle money to Burlingame, the shadiest and most successful lawyer in Askatoon. Tom McMahon, of the McMahon gang, learns of the contemplated cash transaction. That night Joel, while carrying the money, is attacked. The intervention of Orlando, who is riding past, saves his life and money. Orlando is wounded, and Joel has to take the young man to his house to be cared for.

Joel fears to have Louise see Orlando and bribes his Chinese servant to watch and report if the two are together; but the Chinaman is devoted to Louise. He takes tea for both to Orlando's bedside. While they are enjoying the minutes the slender repast gives them, Joel returns. The Chinaman sees him, rushes to the room, grabs up the tea-tray and cries, "Old Mazaline, he come. Be queeck."

But Joel is already making for the stairs. The Chinaman, with Oriental duplicity, drops the tray as if he were falling and lets it crash down at Joel's feet, while Louise slips away to safety.

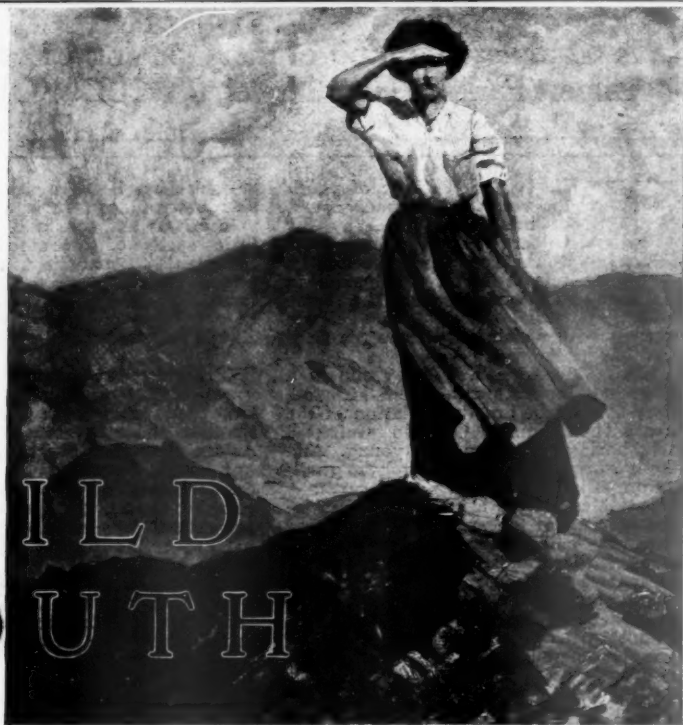
The kicking Joel gives Li Choo starts an enmity in the Oriental that is increased a few days later when the old ranchman threatens Louise with his riding whip because she does not show pleasure at his coming. Li Choo glides between and receives the blows.

Joel's cruelty arouses revolt in the girl. Against his orders she goes to ride on the prairie. Her horse breaks a leg and throws her. Orlando finds her, and while helping her, his own pony runs away. They are forced to spend the night on the prairie.

Joel Mazarine is a demon of vengeance when he learns of it. Only the testimony of a man tramping the prairie, who spent the night near the two, stays his attack on them. "He's a gentleman, and she is the best of the best of the very best," says the man, and Joel is quieted, although he does not say he believes.

The story continues on the next page.

WILD YOUTH



THE MOST FASCINATING NOVEL SIR
GILBERT PARKER HAS EVER WRITTEN

CHAPTER XI

SANCTUARY

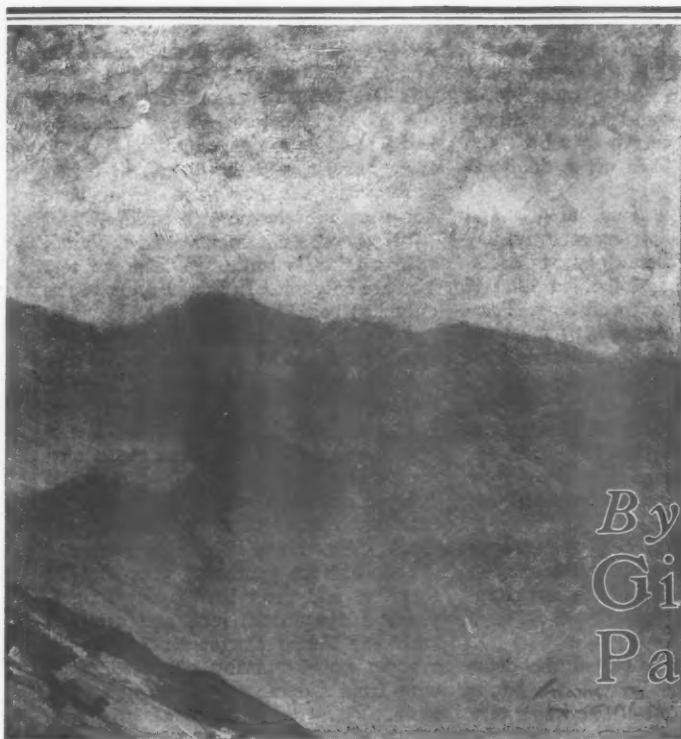
THE Young Doctor had had a trying day. Certain of his cases had given him anxiety; his drives had been long and fatiguing; he had had little sleep for several nights; and he was what Patsy Kernaghan had called "brittle;" for when Patsy was in a state bordering on bad temper and violence, he used to say, "I'm so brittle I'll break if you look at me." As the Young Doctor drew his chair up to the supper-table and looked at his food with a critical air, he was very brittle.

For one born in Inniskillen he had an even nature, but its evenness was more

the result of training and mental control than temperament. He sighed as he looked at the marrow-bones which, as a rule, gave him joy when their turn came in the weekly menu; he eyed askance the baked potatoes; and the salad waiting for his skilled hand only gave him an extra feeling of fatigue.

Most men in a like state say, "I don't know what's the matter with me," and yet many a one has been stimulated out of it, away from it, by the soft voice and friendly hand of a woman.

There was, however, no woman to distract the over-worked Young Doctor by her freshness and charm, drawn from the reservoir of her vitality; and that was a pity, because, as Patsy Kernaghan many a time said: "Aw, Doctor dear, what's the good of a tongue to a wagon



By
Gilbert
Parker

Illustrated by
Frank B. Hoffman.

if there's only wan horse to draw it! Shure, you'll think a lot more of yourself whin you're able to stand at the head of your own table and say grace for two at least, and thanksgiving for manny, if it's the will of God."

The Young Doctor did not know why he was so brittle, but the truth is he was feeding on himself, and that is a poor business. Every dog knows it is good to feed on the knuckle of a goat if he hasn't got a beef-bone, and every real man knows—though to know anything at all he must have been married—that any marriage is better than no marriage at all; because whether it's happy or unhappy, it makes you concerned for some one besides yourself, if you have any soul or sense at all.

The Young Doctor was under the de-

A COMPLETE RÉSUMÉ OF THE PRE-
CEDING CHAPTERS OF "WILD YOUTH"
WILL BE FOUND ON PAGE 1175

lusion that he loved his lonely table and the making of a simple salad for a simple man, but then he came from Ireland and had imagination; and that is always a curse when it isn't a blessing, for there is nothing between the two. At the end of his troubled day he almost cursed the salad as it crinkled in the dish just slightly rubbed with garlic. He was turning away in apathy from it—from the bones with the marrow oozing out of the ends, from the bursting baked potatoes, from the beautiful crusts of brown bread, when he heard the doorbell ring. At the sound his face set as though it were mortar. He wanted no

patients this night; but from the peremptory sound of the bell he was sure some one had come who needed medicine or the knife, and he could refuse neither; for was he not at everybody's beck and call, the Medicine Man whose door was everybody's door!

"Damnation!" he said aloud, and turned toward the door expectantly.

Having ejected the sulphurous exclamation, he bitted and bridled himself to wait; and he did not wait long. Presently he heard a voice say, "I must see him." Then the door opened wide, and Louise Mazarine stepped into the room. Her face was pale and distraught; her wonderful blue eyes, with their long, melancholy lashes, stared at him in appealing apprehension. Her lips were almost white; her hands trembled out towards him.

"I've come—I've come!" she said, as though it was some great consummating act. It had the finality of the last chapter of a book.

THE Young Doctor closed the door, ignoring for the instant the hands held out to him. After all, he was a very sane Young Doctor, and he had the faculty of keeping his head, and his heart, and his own counsel. Also he knew that there was an inquisitive old servant loitering in the hallway.

When the door was closed, he turned round on Louise slowly, and then he held out his hands to her, for she was shrinking away, as though he had repulsed her. He took her trembling hands within his own, pressed them firmly with that emotion which only a faithful friendship shows, and said:

"Yes, I know you've come, but tell me what I don't know—what you've come for."

"I couldn't bear it any longer," she said brokenly. "I'm not made of steel or stone. It's been terrible. He doesn't speak to me except to order me to do this or that. I haven't done anything wrong, and I won't be treated so. I won't! When he made me kneel down by him even in the trail and tried to make me pray to be forgiven of my sins, I couldn't stand it. I don't know what my sins are, and I won't be converted if

I don't want to. I'm not a slave. I'm of age. I'm twenty."

There was no sign of fatigue now in the Young Doctor's face. Something had called him out of himself, away from himself, and the human need had done what a wife's hand might have done, or the welcome of a child.

"No, you're not twenty," he declared, with a friendly smile. "You aren't ten. You are only one. In fact, I think you're only just born!"

He did not speak as lightly as the words read. In his voice there was pity and that compassionate irony with which men shield those for whom they care. It means protection and defense. Somehow she seemed to him like a small bird on its first flight from the nest, or, as Patsy Kernaghan would have said, "A tame lamb loose in a Zoological garden."

"So, because you won't pray and be forgiven, and can't bear it any longer, you run away from him, and come to me!" the Young Doctor remarked with a sorry smile, pouring out a glass of wine from a decanter that stood on the table.

"Drink this," he said presently, pushing her down gently into a chair with one hand and holding the glass to her lips. "Drink it every drop. As I said, you've only run away from one master to fall into another master's hands. You're a wicked girl. Drink it—every drop.... That's right."

He took the empty glass from her, put it on the table, and then stood and looked at her meditatively, fastening her eyes with his own. More than her eyes were fastened, however. Her mind was also under control; but that was because she believed in him so.

"Yes, you're a wicked girl," he said decisively.

She shuddered and shrank back. In her eyes was a helpless look, very different from that which she had given not so many days before when, with Orlando Guise behind her, she had defied her aged husband in his doorway, and her defiance had moved him from her path. Then she had been inspired by the fact that the man she loved was near her, that she had been wrongfully ac-

cused and was ready to fight. Afterwards, however, when she was alone, the almost dumb, sterile presence of Joel Mazarine, his merciless eyes, the chill rancor of his manner, his hopeless religious tyranny, had worn upon her as his past violence had never done.

"Wicked!" Did the Young Doctor, then, believe her guilty? Did he, of all men, think that the night upon the prairie alone with Orlando had been her undoing? Had not the brother of Rigby the chemist borne witness with his own eyes to her complete innocence? If the Young Doctor disbelieved, then indeed she was undone.

"You don't think that of me—of me!" she gasped, her lips all white again. She got to her feet excitedly. "You shall not believe it of me."

"No, I did not say I believed *that*," the Young Doctor remarked almost casually. "But if I did believe it, I don't know that it would make much difference to me. I don't know that I should have called it wicked. Fate, or God Almighty, or whatever it was, had stacked the cards against you. When I said that it was wicked, I meant you did wrong in leaving your husband like this, in rushing away from him to me. I suppose you have definitely deserted your husband—eh? You've 'left' him, as they say?"

The Young Doctor had an incorrigible sense of humor, and he had also an infinite common sense. He wanted to break this spell of tense emotion which possessed her. So he pursued a new course.

"Don't you think it's rather hard on me?" he continued. "I'm a lone man in this house, with only one old woman to protect me, and I'm unmarried. I've a reputation to lose, and there are a lot of mothers and daughters hereabouts. Besides, a medical practice is hard to get and not easy to keep. What do you mean by making a refuge of me, when there's nothing for me in it, not even the satisfaction of going into the Divorce Court with you? You wicked Mrs. Mazarine!"

"Oh, don't speak to me like that!" Louise interjected. "Please don't. Don't scold me. I had to come. I was going mad."

THE Young Doctor had the case well in hand. He had eased the terrible tension; he was slowly reducing her to the normal. It was the only thing to do.

"What did Mazarine do or say to you that made you run away? Come now, didn't you first make up your mind to go to Slow Down Ranch—to Orlando?"

She flushed. "Yes, but only for a minute. Then I thought of you, because I knew you could help me as no one else could. Everybody believes in you. But then Li Choo—"

"Oh, Li Choo! So Li Choo comes into this, eh? So Li Choo said fly to Orlando, eh? Well, that's what Li Choo would do. But why Li Choo—a Chinaman? Tell me, what does Li Choo know?"

Quickly she told him the story of the day when Joel Mazarine had almost surprised her in Orlando's room; how Li Choo had saved the situation by falling down the staircase with the priceless porcelain, and how Mazarine had kicked him—"manhandled" him, as they say in the West.

"Chinamen don't like being kicked, and particularly Chinamen of Li Choo's station," remarked the Young Doctor meditatively. "You don't know, of course, that Li Choo was a prince or a big bug of some sort in his own country. Why he left China I don't know, but I do chance to know that if another Chinky meets Li Choo carrying a basket on his shoulders, or a package in his hand, he kow-tows, and takes it away from him, and carries it himself.....

No, I don't know why Li Choo is here in Askatoon, or why he's such a slave to Mrs. Mazarine; but I do know that he's a different-looking man when a Chinky runs up against him than when he's choring or gardening at Mayo. A sick Chinaman told me only a week ago that Li Choo was 'once big high boss Chinaman in Pekin'..... And so the mandarin advised you to fly to Orlando, did he? I wonder if it's a way they have in China."

"But I wouldn't go. I've come to you—Patsy Kernaghan brought me," Louise urged.

"Yes, I see you've come to me," remarked the Young Doctor dryly, "and you've stayed now about long enough



"Drink it, every drop. As I said, you've only run away from one master to fall into another master's hands. You're a wicked girl. Drink it—every drop . . . That's right."

for me to feel your pulse and diagnose your case. And now you're going back with your Patsy Kernaghan to your own home."

She trembled; then she seemed to strengthen herself in defiance. What a change it was from the child of a few weeks ago—indeed, of a few moments ago! The same passionate determination and courage which seized her when she faced Mazarine with Orlando, possessed her again. With her whole being palpitating, she said: "I will not go back. I will not go back. I will kill myself first."

"That would be a useless sacrifice of yourself and others," the Young Doctor answered quietly. Seeing that the new thing in her was not to be conquered in a moment, he quickly made up his mind what to do.

"See," he continued, "you needn't go back to Mayo to-night, but you're not going to stay here, dear child. I'll take you over to Nolan Doyle's ranch, to Mrs. Doyle. You'll spend the night there, and we'll think about to-morrow when to-morrow comes. You certainly can't stay here. I'm not going to have it. Bless you, you're neither so young nor so old as all that!"

Suddenly he grasped both her arms and looked her in the face. "My dear young lady," he said gently, "I'm not your only friend, but I'm a stout friend—so stout that there isn't a mount can carry us both together. When you ride, I walk; when I ride, you walk—you understand? We don't walk or ride together. I'm taking care of you. You're too good to be spoiled. Your life is too good to be ruined by rashness. You're in a 'state,' as my old housekeeper would say, but you'll be all right presently. As soon as I've made a salad, and had a marrow-bone, you and I and Patsy Kernaghan are going to Nolan Doyle's ranch.... My dear child, you must do what I say, and if you do, you'll be happy yet. I don't see how, quite, but it is so; and meanwhile, you mustn't make any mistakes. You must play the game. And now come and have some supper."

She waved her hand in protest. "I can't eat," she said. "Indeed, I can't."

"Well, you can drink," he answered.

"You shall not leave this house alive unless you have a pint of milk with a little dash of what Patsy calls 'oh-be-joyful' in it."

He left the room for a moment, while she sat watching the door as a prisoner might watch for the return of a friendly jailer. He had a curious influence over her. It was wholly different from that of Orlando. Presently he returned.

"It's all right," he said. "Patsy and you and I will be at Nolan Doyle's ranch in another hour. I've sent word to Mrs. Doyle. I've ordered your milk-punch too, and now I think I'll make my salad. You never saw me make a salad," he added, smiling. "I've done some successful operations in my day; I've played about with bones and sinews, proud of my work sometimes, but the making of a perfect salad is the proud achievement of a master-mind." He laughed like a boy. "'Come hither, come hither, my little daughter, and do not tremble so,'" he said so cheerfully as to be almost jeering.

His cheerfulness was not in vain, for a smile stole to her lips, though it only flickered for an instant and was gone. For all that, he knew he had saved the situation, and that another chapter of the life-history of Orlando and Louise had been ended. A fresh chapter would begin to-morrow; but sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof.

CHAPTER XII

MAN UNNATURAL

MAZARINE discovered the flight of

Louise soon after she had gone. He had not been five hundred yards from the house since she returned with Orlando after the night spent upon the prairie, save when he had been obliged to go in to Askatoon and had taken her with him, dumb and passive. She had been a prisoner, tied to the stirrups of her captor; and he had admonished and berated her, had preached at her, quoting scripture from morning until night. Once, on the way to Askatoon, he had even tried to make her kneel down in the dust of the trail and plead with Heaven to convict her of sin.

On the evening of Louise's flight, however, he had been forced to go to a neighboring ranch, and had commanded Li Choo to keep a strict watch at the windows of her room to see that she did not attempt escape. She could not escape by the door of the room because he had the key in his pocket. Li Choo was not a stern jailer, however. Mazarine had not been gone three minutes before Li Choo established communication with Louise. He did more; he threw up into the open window of her room a screw-driver, with which she took the old-fashioned door off its hinges, after half an hour's work. Then, leaving a note on the table of the dining-room, to say that she could not bear it any longer, that she would never come back, and that she was determined to be free, she summoned Patsy Kernaghan and fled to the Young Doctor.

When Mazarine returned and found her note, he plunged up the stairs to her bedroom, his pious wrath gurgling in his throat, only to find the door locked; for Li Choo had promptly restored it to its hinges after Louise had gone, afterward dropping from the high window like a cat, without hurt.

Li Choo, blinking, opaque, immobile, save for his piercing and mysterious eyes, had no explanation to give. All he said was, "Me no see all sides house same time;" so suggesting that, as the room had windows on all three sides, Louise must have escaped while he made his supposed sentry-go, slip-slopping round the house. Mazarine showed his incredulity by spitting in Li Choo's face, and then rushing into the house to get the rawhide whip with which he had punished the Chinaman before, and with which he had threatened his wife.

When he returned a moment afterward, Li Choo was nowhere to be seen; but in his place were two other Chinamen who had, as it were, fallen from the skies, standing where Li Choo had stood, immobile, blinking and passive like Li Choo, their hands lost in the long sleeves of their coats, their pigtailed so tightly braided as, in seeming, to draw their slanting eyelids still to greater incline, and to give a look of petrified intentness to their faces.

Something in their attitude gave Mazarine an unaccountable apprehension. It was as though Li Choo had been suddenly transformed by some hellish magic into two other Chinamen. The rage of his being seemed to stupefy him; he had no will or capacity to resist the sensation of the unnatural.

"What do you want? How did you come here?" he asked of the two in a husky voice.

"We want speak Li Choo. We come see Li Choo," answered one of the Chinamen impassively; but the old man noticed how, in a curious, fantastical way, their tongues, like those of snakes, thrust out slightly between their closed lips.

"He was here a minute ago," answered Mazarine gruffly.

Then he turned away, going swiftly toward the kitchen, and calling to Li Choo. As he went, he was conscious of low, cackling laughter, but when he turned to look, the two Chinamen stood where he had left them, blinking and immobile.

The uncanny feeling in possession of him increased; the thing was unnatural. He lurched on, however, looking for Li Choo. The Chinaman was not to be found in the kitchen, in the woodshed, in the cellar, in the loft, or in his own attic room; and the half-breed, Rada, declared that she had not seen him. He could not be at the stables, for they were too far away to be reached in the time; and there were no signs of him between the house and the stables. When Mazarine returned to the front of the house, the two Chinamen also had vanished; there were no signs of them anywhere. Search did not discover them.

MINGLED anger and fear now possessed Mazarine. He would search no longer. No doubt the other two Chinamen had joined Li Choo in his hiding place, wherever it was. Why had the Chinamen come? What were they after? It did not matter for the moment. What he wanted was Louise, his bad child-wife, who had broken from her cage and flown from him. Where would she go? Where, but to Slow Down Ranch? where, but to her lover,

the circus-rider, the boy with the head of brown curls, with the ring on his finger and the Cupid mouth! Where would she go but to the man with whom she had spent the night on the prairie!

Now he believed altogether that she was guilty, that everybody had conspired to deceive him, that he was in a net of dark deception. The two Chinamen, mysteriously appearing and disappearing, had laughed at him like two heathen gods, and had vanished suddenly like heathen gods. Everything was against him; everyone lied to him to protect her.

A weakness came over him, and the skin of his face became creased and clammy like that of a drowned man; his limbs trembled, so desperate was his passion.

He stumbled into the house and into the dining-room, where he kept a little black-bound Bible once belonging to his great-grandfather. He had thumbed it well in past years, searching it diligently for passages of peculiar violence and denunciation. Now holy superstition seized him in the midst of the work of the devil, surrounding him with an almost medieval instinct, primitive and undeveloped. He seized the ancient book, as it were to deliver its incantations against everyone destroying his peace, stealing from him that which he prized beyond all earthly things.

Take this woman away from him, this child-wife from his sixty-five years, and what was left for him? She was the garden of spring in which his old age roamed at ease luxuriously. She was the fruit of the tree of pleasure. She was that which made him young again, renewed in him youth and the joys of youth.

Take her away, the flower that smelled so sweet and luscious, the thing that he had held so often to his lips and to his breast? Take away what was his, by every holy right, because it was all according to the law of the land and of the Holy Gospel, and what was left? Only old age, the empty house bereft of a fair young mistress, a face of beauty at his table, something to smile at and to curse, if need be, since it was his own by the laws of God and man.

Take her away, and the two wives that he had buried long years ago, with their gray heads and lank, sour faces, from which the light of youth had fled with the first child come to them—their ghosts would seek him out. They would sit at his table, and taunt him with his vanished Louise, asking him if he thought she was anything more than one of the trolls that tempted men aforetime; one of the devil's wenches that lured him into the secret garden, only to leave him abject, scorned and alone, and to destroy him in the end.

Where had she gone, his troll, with the face of an angel? Where had she gone? Where would she go, except to her devil's lover at Slow Down Ranch!

HE had just started for Slow Down Ranch armed with his greasy, well-thumbed Bible like a weapon in his pocket, when he heard a voice call him. It was full of that devil's laughter by which he seemed to be surrounded. It was the voice of Burlingame, the lawyer, on his horse. Burlingame had had a weary day and was refreshing himself by a canter on the prairie.

"Where are you going?" asked Burlingame, as he cantered up to Mazarine's wagon. "To Slow Down Ranch?"

He saw the look of the drowned man in the face of Mazarine, over whom the flood of disaster had passed, and he guessed at once the cause of it; for Burlingame had a Satanic mind, and he knew with an inevitable philosophy the things that happen to human nature.

"So, she's gone again, has she?" he added slowly and deliberately, and with intent to put a knife into the old man's feelings and to turn it in the thick of them. He wanted to hurt, because Mazarine had only a short time before suddenly dispensed with his services as a lawyer, and had blocked the way to that intimacy which he had hoped to establish with Mayo and its mistress. Besides, his pride as a professional man had been hurt, and he had been deprived of income which now went to his most detested professional rival. Mazarine's jealous soul had cut him off, on becoming familiar with Burlingame's dark reputation. He had not liked the look

Burlingame had given Louise when they met.

"Gone again, has she?" Burlingame repeated sarcastically. "Well, you needn't go to Slow Down Ranch to find her. She isn't there, and you won't find him there either, for I saw him come by the Lark River Trail into Askatoon as I left, and a lady was with him. He booked this morning for the sleeper of the express going East to-night; so, if I were you, I'd turn my horse's nose to Askatoon, Mr. Mazarine. I don't know why I tell you this, as you're not my client now, but I go about the world doing good, Mr. Mazarine—only doing good."

There was a look in Burlingame's face which Heaven would not have accepted as a sign of his goodness, and there was that in his voice which did not belong to the Courts of the Lord. Malice, though veiled, showed in face and sounded in voice. Even as he spoke, Joel Mazarine turned his horse's head toward Askatoon.

"You're sure a woman was with him? You're sure she was with him?" he asked in a chaos of passion.

"I couldn't see her face; it was too far away," answered Burlingame suggestively, "but you can form your own conclusions—and the express is due in thirty minutes!"

He took out his watch and looked at it complacently. "What's the good, Mazarine? Why don't you say, 'Go and sin no more?' Or why don't you divorce her with the evidence about that night on the prairie? I could have got you a verdict and damages. Yes, I could have got you plenty of damages. He's rich. You took her back and condoned; you condoned, Mazarine, and now you'll neither have damages nor wife—and the express goes in thirty minutes!"

"The express won't take Mrs. Mazarine East to-night," the old man said savagely, a look of jungle fierceness slowly displacing the clammy helplessness of his face.

Burlingame laughed unpleasantly. "Yes, you'll foul your own nest, Mazarine, and then bring her back to live in it. I know you. It isn't the love of God in your heart, because you'll never for-

give her; but you'll bring her back to the nest you fouled, just because you want her—'You damned and luxurious mountain goat,' as Shakespeare called your kind."

With another laugh which somewhat resembled that of the two strange vanished Chinamen, Burlingame flicked his horse and cantered away. A little time afterward, however, he turned and looked toward Askatoon, and he saw the old man whipping his horse into a gallop to reach Askatoon railway station before the express went East.

"It's true, Mazarine," he said aloud. "Orlando booked for the sleeper going East in thirty minutes; but the sleeper was for one only, and that one was his mother, you old hippopotamus. . . . But I wonder where she is—where the divine Louise is? She hasn't levanted with her Orlando. . . . Now, I wonder!" he added.

Then, with a sudden impulse, he dug heels into his horse's side, and galloped back toward Askatoon. He wanted to see what would happen before the express went East.

CHAPTER XIII

ORLANDO GIVES A WARNING

ASKATOON had never lost its interest for Mazarine and his wife since the day the Mayor had welcomed them at the railway station, and Louise's hand had clung to that of the Young Doctor, as though appealing for protection. Askatoon was not a petty town. Its career had been checkered and interesting, and it had given haven to a large population of uncommon people. Adventures, excitements and unusual happenings had been its portion ever since it had been the rail-head of the Great Transcontinental Line, and many enterprising men, instead of moving on with the railway, when it ceased to be the rail-head, settled there and gave the place its character. The town had never been lawless, although some lawless people had sojourned there, and had even set up tabernacles of repentance and reform within its unbounded boundaries.

It was too busy a place to be fussing



He had been obliged to go into Askatoon and had taken her with him, a prisoner, tied to the stirrups of her captor; and he had admonished and berated her, had preached at her, quoting scripture from morning until night.

about little things, or tearing people's characters to pieces, or gossiping even to the usual degree; yet in its history it had never gossiped so much as it had done since the Mazarines had come.

From the first the vast majority of the people had sided with Louise, and had denounced Mazarine. They knew well she had married too young to be self-seeking or intriguing; and in any case, no woman in Askatoon or yet in the West, could have conceived of a girl marrying "the ancient one from the jungle," as Burlingame the lawyer had called him; for Burlingame did not care what he called anybody, when he became that anybody's enemy.

Burlingame could never have been on the side of the Ten Commandments himself, even with a sure and certain hope of happiness on earth, and in Heaven also, guaranteed to him. Nothing could have condemned Mazarine so utterly as the coalition between the "holy good people," as Burlingame called them, and himself; and between the holy good people and himself were many people who in their secret hearts would never have shunned Louise if, after the night on the prairie with Orlando, release had been found for her in the Divorce Court. Jonas Billings had put the matter in a nutshell when he said:

"It aint natural, them two, at Mayo. For marrying her he ought to be tarred and feathered, and for the way he treats her he ought to be let loose in the ha'nts of the grizzlies. What he done to that girl is a crime ag'in' the law. If there was any real spunk in the Methodists, they'd spit him out like pus."

That was exactly what the Methodist body had decided to do on the very day that Louise had fled from Mayo and the old man pursued her in the wrong direction. The Methodist body had determined to discipline Mazarine, and to eject him from their Communion, because he had raised a whip against his wife; because he had maltreated Li Choo; and because he had used language unbecoming a professing Christian. They had decided that Mazarine's conduct had not represented the righteous indignation of a Christian man, but of one who had backslided, and who, in the

words of Rigby the chemist, "Must be spewed out of the mouth of the righteous into the dust of shame."

THAT was the situation when Joel Mazarine drove furiously into the town and made for the railway station. Men like Jonas Billings, who saw him, and had the scent for sensation and excitement, passed the word on downtown, as it is called, that something "was up" with Mazarine, and the railway station was the place where what was up could be seen. Therefore, a quarter of an hour before the arrival of the express which was to carry Orlando Guise's mother to her sick sister three hundred miles down the line; a goodly number of citizens had gathered at the station—far more than usually watched the entrance or exit of the express.

Mazarine's wagon and steaming horses were tied up outside the station, and inside on the platform Moses-not-much, as Mazarine had been called by Jonas Billings, marched up and down, his little malevolent eyes blinking at the doorway of the station reception-room. People came, and some of them nodded to him derisively. Some, with more hardihood, asked him if he was going East; if he was expecting anyone; if he was seeing somebody off.

A good many asked him the last question, because, as the minutes had passed, Burlingame had arrived. He had also disclosed his great joke to those who would carry it far and near, together with the news that Louise had taken flight. The last fact, however, was known to several people, because more than one had seen the Young Doctor and Patsy Kernaghan escorting Louise to Nolan Doyle's ranch.

It was dusk. The lamps of the station were being lighted five minutes before the express arrived, and as the lights flared up, Orlando entered the waiting-room of the station, with a lady on his arm, and presently appeared at the platform doorway, smiling and cheerful. He did not even blench when Mazarine came toward him. Mazarine had seen the flutter of a blue skirt in the waiting-room, and his wife had worn blue that day!

Orlando saw the heavy, offensive fig-

ure of Mazarine making for him. He, however, appeared to take no notice, though he watched his outrageous pursuer out of the corner of his eye, as he quietly gave directions to a porter concerning a little heap of luggage on the platform. When he had finished this, he turned, as it were casually and indifferently, to Mazarine. Then he giggled in the face of the Master of Mayo. It was like the matador's waving of the scarlet cloth in the face of the enraged bull. Having thus relieved his feelings, Orlando turned and walked to the door of the reception room, but was stopped in his course by the old man's rushing at him. Swinging round, Orlando almost filled the doorway.

"You devil's spawn," Mazarine almost shouted, "get out of that doorway. I want my wife. You needn't try to hide her. You thief! You lecherous circus-rider! Stand aside! Stand aside—leper!"

Orlando coolly stretched out his elbows till they touched the sides of the door, and as the crowd pressed, he said to them mockingly:

"Get back, boys. Give him air. Can't you see he's gasping for breath." Then he giggled again.

THE old man looked round at the crowd, but he saw no sympathy—only aversion and ridicule. Suddenly he snatched his little black-bound Bible from his pocket, and held it up.

"What does this Book say?" he thundered. "It says that a wife shall cleave unto her husband until death. For the seducer and the betrayer death is the portion."

The whistle of the incoming train was heard in the distance.

The old man was desperate. It was clear he meant to assault Orlando. "You will only take her away over my dead body," he ground out in his passion. "The Lord gave, and only the Lord shall take away." He gathered himself together for the attack.

Orlando waved a hand at him as one would at a troublesome child. At that instant, his mother stepped up behind him in the reception-room.

"Orlando," she said in her mincing,

pipng little voice, "Orlando dear, the train is coming. Let me out. I'm not afraid of that bad man. I want to catch my train."

Orlando stepped aside, and his mother passed through, to the consternation of Mazarine, who fell back. The old man now realized that Burlingame had tricked him. Laughter went up from the crowd. They had had a great show at no cost.

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," Mr. Mazarine!" called some one from the crowd.

"It's the next train she's going by, old Moses-not-much," shouted a friend of Jonas Billings.

"She's had enough of you, Joel!" sneered another mocker.

"Wouldn't you like to know where she is, yellow-lugs?" queried a fat washer-woman.

For an instant Mazarine stood bemused and overcome, and then, thrusting the Bible into his pocket, he drew himself up in an effort of pride and defiance.

"Judases! Jezebels!" he burst out at them all.

Then he lunged through the doorway of the reception-room; but at the door opening on the street his courage gave way, and hunched up like one in pain, he ran toward the hitching-post where he had left his horses and wagon. They were not there. With a groan which was also a malediction, he went up the street like a wounded elephant, and made his way to the police station through a town which had no pity for him.

During the half-hour he remained in the town, Mazarine searched in vain for his horses and wagon. He looked everywhere except the shed behind the Methodist Church. It was there the two wags who had played the trick on him had carefully hitched the horses, and presently they announced in town that they did it because they knew Mazarine would want to go to the prayer-meeting to lay his sorrows and crimes before the Mercy Seat.

It was quite true that it was prayer-meeting night, and as the merciless wags left the shed, the voice of brother Rigby the chemist was narrating for the

hundredth time the story of his conversion, when, as he said, "the pains of hell gat hold of him." Brother Rigby loved to relate the tortures of the day when he was convicted of sin; but on this night his ancient story seemed particularly appropriate, as he had dealt with great severity on the doings of the backslider, Joel Mazarine.

WHEN the two wild wags returned to the front street of Askatoot, they were just in time to see the second meeting of Orlando and Mazarine. Mazarine had not been able to find his horses at any hotel or livery-stable, or in any street. It was at the moment, when, in his distraction, he had decided to walk back to Mayo, that Orlando, driving up the street, saw him. Orlando reined in his horses, dropped from his buggy and approached him.

There was a look in Orlando's eyes which was a reflection from a remote past, from ancestors who had settled their difficulties with the first weapon and the best opportunity to their hands. "The furrin element in him," as Jonas Billings called it, had been at full flood ever since he had bade his mother goodbye. A storm of anger had been raised in him. As he said to himself, he had had enough; he had been filled up to the chin by the Mazarine business; and his impulsive youth wanted to end it by some smashing act which would be at once sensational and decisive. So it was that chance afforded him the opportunity, as he came up the front street of Askatoot, and found himself face to face with Mazarine, over against the offices of Burlingame the lawyer.

"A word with you, Mr. Mazarine," he said with the air of a man who wants to ease his mind of its trouble by action. "Back there at the station, I kept my tongue and let you down easy enough, because my mother was present. She is old and sensitive, and she doesn't like to see her son doing the dirty work every man must do some time or other, when there's street-cleaning to be done. Now, let me tell you this: you've slandered as good a girl, you've libeled as straight a wife, as the best man in the world ever had. You've made a public scandal of

your private life. You've treated the pure thing as if it were the foul thing; and yet, you want to keep the pure thing that you treat like a foul thing, under your rawhide whip, because it's young and beautiful and good. You don't want to save her soul,"—he pointed to the Bible, which the old man had snatched from his pocket again,—"you don't want to save her soul. You don't care whether she's happy in this world or the next; what you want is what you can see of her, for your life in this world only. You want—"

The old man interrupted him with a savage emotion which Jonas Billings said made him look like "a satyre."

"I want to save her from the wrath to come," he said. "This here holy book gives me my rights. It says, 'Thou shalt not steal,' and the trouble I have comes from you that's stole my wife, that's put her soul in jeopardy, robbed my home—"

"Robbed your home?" interjected Orlando quietly, but with a voice of suppressed passion. "Robbed your home! Why, the other day you tried to prevent her entering it. You wanted to shut her out. After she had lived with you all these years, you believed she lied to you when she told you the truth about that night on the prairie; but her innocence was proved by one who was there all the time, and for shame's sake you had to let her in. But she couldn't stand it. I don't wonder. A lark wouldn't be at home where a vulture roosted."

"And so the lark flies away to the cuckoo," snarled the old man, with flecks of froth gathering at the corners of his mouth; for the sight of this wonderful, glowing, handsome, long-limbed youth enraged him beyond the limits of even pious rage.

"Give her back to me. You know where she is," he persisted. "You've got her hid away. That's why you've sent your mother East—so's she wouldn't know, though from what I see, I shouldn't have thought it'd have made much difference to her."

Exclamations broke from the crowd. It was the wild West. It was a country where, not twenty years before, men did justice upon men without the assistance of the law; and the West understood

that the dark insult just uttered would in days not far gone have meant death for either one man or the other. The onlookers exclaimed, and then became silent, because a subtle sense of tragedy suddenly possessed them and, as it were, smothered their voices. Upon the silence there broke a little giggling laugh. It came from lips that were one in paleness with a face grown stony in its resentment.

"I ought to kill you," Orlando said quietly after a moment, yet scarcely above a whisper. "I ought to kill you, Mazarine, but that would only be playing your game, for the law would get hold of me, and the girl that has left you would be sad and sorrowful, for she knows I love her, though I never told her so. She'd be sorry to see the law get at me. She's going to be mine some day, in the right way."

"I'm not going behind your back to say it; I'm announcing it to all and sundry. I never did a thing to her that couldn't have been seen by all the world, and I never said a thing to her that couldn't be heard by all the world; but I hope she'll never go back to you. You've made a sewer for her to live in, not a home."

"As I said, I ought to kill you, but that would play your game, so I won't, not now. But I tell you this, Mazarine: if I ever meet you again, and I'm sure to do so; and you don't get off the road that I'm traveling on, or the sidewalk I'm walking on, when I meet you or when I pass you, I'll let you have what'll send you to hell, before you can wink twice."

"As for Louise—as for her: I don't know where she is, but I'll find her. One thing is sure: if I see her, I'll tell her never to go back to you; and she won't. You've drunk at the waters of Canaan for the last time, Mazarine. For a Christian you're pretty filthy. Go and wash in the pool of Siloam and be clean—damn you, Mazarine!"

WITH that he turned, almost unseeing and unheeding the hands thrust out to grip his, the voices murmuring ap-

proval. In a moment he had swung his horses round. Like almost everyone else in Askatoon, when in trouble he be-thought him of the Young Doctor. He did not go beyond ten yards, however, before some one, running beside his wagon, whispered up to him: "She's out at Nolan Doyle's Ranch. She went with the Young Doctor and Patsy Kernaghan."

Behind, in the street, a young boy came running through the crowd and shouting: "I know where they are! I know where they are!" He stopped before Mazarine. "Gimme half a dollar, and I'll tell you where your horses are. Gimme half a dollar. Gimme half a dollar, and I'll tell you."

An instant later, with the half-dollar in his hand, he said: "They're up to the shed of the Meetin' House."

"Yes, go along up to the Meetin' House, Mr. Mazarine," said one of the miscreants who had driven the horses there. "They're holding a post mortem on you at the prayer meetin'. They say you're dead in trespasses and sins. Get along, Joel."

The crowd started to follow him to the shed where his horses were, but after a moment he turned on them and said:

"Aint you heerd and seen enough? Aint there no law to protect a man?"

A hoe was leaning against a fence. He saw it, and with sudden fury, seizing it, swung it round his head as if to throw it into the crowd. At that moment a stalwart constable ran forward and raised a hand toward Mazarine, and then addressed the crowd.

"We've had enough of this," he said. "I'll lock up any man that goes a step further towards the Meetin' House. Where you think you are? This is Askatoon, the place of peace and happiness, and we're going to be happy, if I have to lock up the hull lot of you. I guess you can go right on, Mr. Mazarine," he added. "Go right on and git your wagon."

A moment later Mazarine was walking alone toward the Meeting House; but no, not alone, for a hundred devils were with him.

The next installment of "Wild Youth" will appear in the November Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands October 23rd.



The Persistent Wooer

HE would not take No for an answer—till Jerry appeared: an unusual story of chorus-girl life.

By Janet Priest

ILLUSTRATED BY R. F. JAMES

HETTY HOWARD stood with one eye glued to the peek-hole in the curtain. The orchestra was putting its final flourishes into the overture of "Juliet of Joliet."

"Say, Hetty, that's a good imitation of a set tree you're giving," murmured Munson, a sarcastic-looking girl at her elbow. "Maybe some one else would like to see their friends out front."

The chorus beauty was undisturbed. "I'm simply fascinated by Doll-Baby's new John," she explained as she yielded her vantage-point. "He has freckles and cross-eyes and red hair."

The owner of a head of red-brown curls ran forward to speak for herself. "My new John! Why, Hetty, you know I haven't saw a new one for a month. The same two Evanston boys has been beaung us around all through this Chicago run."

"Good reason why," said Hester, as she selected a golf-stick from a big sheaf of them that Bones, the property-man, was dispensing. "I've squelched him every night at the stage door before you got your street clothes on. Say, it must ache to be as homely as that."

"Oh, let me see," squealed Dolly.

"Quiet," the call-boy yelled above the chatter and the music. "First act! Places!"

Doll-Baby stepped daintily into line with the "ponies;" Hester joined the show-girls, Munson the "medium" girls; and the opening chorus, "As on the links we're straying," began the performance with shrill tunefulness.

HESTER and Dolly, both good workers, were totally different in appearance and temperament. Tall, brunette and serious, Hetty acted as pro-

lector and adviser to Doll-Baby, who was of the appealing, "cuddly" type. They were merry, guileless creatures, not much embarrassed with brains, but their morals and manners were more than correct, according to chorus-girl standards, even if their idea of a good time did consist of indulgence in pounds of candy, bushels of flowers and miles of automobile-rides.

When the star's entrance song had been completed by a laudable attempt at a high note, and received with perfunctory applause, Garson, the fat comedian, dared to whisper to Dolly as they waited off-stage for their cues:

"People's gotta hand it to you and Hetty. No one can say *that* about you!"—*that* being a snap of a pudgy thumb and finger.

"Oh, we like to have a good time," Dolly acknowledged. "Hetty and me both like to have a good time. But just let them get fresh and start something! Hetty knows how to finish 'em!"

"Sh-h," warned Andrews, the stage-manager. "Less noise."

Dolly beamed at him. She and Andrews were great friends, but she knew he had to maintain discipline. She walked over to the steam-pipes that lined the rear wall, Garson following, and indulged in a soft little giggle.

"Say, Cupid, that guy in the last town sure was a scream. When we refused to go ridin' with him, he says, 'Why do you s'pose I spent them four dollars on you?' 'For charity, little boy,' says Hetty. 'We're related to the Belgians. Now run along and sell your papers.' Oh, Hetty can handle 'em all right."

According to Dolly, Hetty could handle anything all right. The girls had been "palling" together for two years. If one became dissatisfied or received her two weeks' notice from a cruel management, the other packed her grip simultaneously.

GARSON went on for a short scene.

He was grinning when he returned.

"Saw your cross-eyed John out there," he said. "Say, I wonder you girls don't marry some of these guys and settle down." He felt that his fatherly interest gave him a right to be personal.

Dolly came forward and seated herself beside the switchboard in the big leather chair that the electrician had just vacated for her. "Thanks, Shorty! Well, you see it's like this: Hetty has the worst luck! Every man that falls in love with her is married already. That sweet, sad way of hers gets them every time. They offer her houses and lots and diamonds if she'll only fly with 'em, but Hetty aint no aviator. Poor girl! I guess people has to have seen trouble to appreciate Hetty." Doll-Baby sighed.

"What about yourself?"

"Oh, I've been married. Some man!" She looked up into the "lies" in ecstatic reminiscence.

"Well, where is he now?"

"I dunno," she murmured, "but I'll tell you a secret. I left him, but I love him still. Say, wouldn't that make a grand title for a movie—'She Left Him, but She Loves Him Still'?"

"But why did you leave him, if you liked him so much?"

"Well, we just got so jealous of each other that one roof wouldn't hold us down. Finally I says, 'Oh, what's the use?' I says, 'I'll go back on the road and you can bring your blonde here. Maybe then we'll have some peace in the family.' So I did the big twenty-three, with him follering me to the door, all the time calling out, 'There aint no blonde! There aint no blonde!' That's the last I seen of him, but my heart often aches for that doll." She winked back a tear that threatened to spoil her make-up.

"Well," said Garson, "you don't act the part of *Leah the Forsaken* worth a cent."

Dolly shifted her chewing-gum. "Oh, well, I may put on a smiling face when I see these yaps digging into their next week's salary to buy wine for Hetty and me,—you know Hester can't drink beer: it makes her sick,—but all the time I'm thinking, 'Kid, you aint one-two-three with my Jerry.'"

THE cue, "Her young companions are approaching," was heard from the stage, thereby putting an end to the conversation, and Dolly stuck her gum on a convenient angle of the wood-wing.



"Say, Hetty, that's a good imitation of a set free you're giving," murmured Munson. "Maybe some one else would like to see their friends out front."

After "Juliet of Joliet" had run through its usual round of scenes and the curtain had fallen on the last act, Andrews handed Hetty a telegram. It had come early in the evening, but like most careful stage-managers, Andrews was no advocate of the interruption of a performance by hysterics and fainting-fits.

Hetty's grandmother, her nearest living relative, was dangerously ill. She packed hurriedly and with a few motherly admonitions to Dolly, caught the midnight train for the small Ohio town where she had spent an occasional vacation.

Her chum gone, Dolly felt deserted. "Alone in a big city!" she sighed. "Aint it funny the way I'm always getting them poetic ideas? I gotta hunch I ought to write for the fillums."

This, it would seem, was the psychological moment for the cross-eyed John. A friend of Munson's offered to introduce him, and so well did he employ his opportunity that in a few days Dolly was writing frantic appeals to Hester.

"Dear Hetty," she began,

"Munson's friend interduced me to that John that's been sitting out front, and you know I'm awful superstishus about cross-eyed men. I've tried to be very sevar and forbidding, but it don't do no good.

"I'm his ideal, Hetty. Where have we heard that stuff before? Last night after the show he took me to Churchill's, and I ordered the most expensive things I could find on the bill, when I was dying to have a stein of Pilsener and a Swiss cheese sandwidge at some quiet place. I wanted to discurridge him so he wouldn't ask me again, but he did. Maybe he wont keep the date.

"I'm keeping your side of the bureau empty so you can unpack the minuit you get in, but I'm useing *all* the towels because it feels so grand to have so many all to myself.

"Your pal,

"Dolly.

"P.S. How's your grandmother?

"P.S. Munson had the nerve to ask Andrews to let her dress in your place while you're gone. We went to the mat right away."

HESTER evidently did not give serious thought to the affair of the unwelcome admirer. Her answer came on a picture postal showing the St. Marysburg city hall. The correspondence half of the card read: "Granny still very sick. Give the girls my love." The city hall was surmounted by a flag, a dotted line from which led to the legend, "Flagged! it's a dry town!"

Dolly, without the companionship of her friend, dragged through her work in a half-hearted sort of way.

"Wake up, Dalzelle," Andrews admonished her during a matinée, "or you'll be following your room-mate to the tall grass. And tell Hester she'd better hurry back. 'The Babes from Broadway' has just closed, and there's plenty talent looking for her job."

Dolly was just on the verge of a good cry any minute. Perkins, her new admirer, continued in his well-meant but undesired attentions, and Dolly, used to having Hester on hand to "play gooseberry," was utterly unable to rout him.

Another appeal went pleadingly into the "timothy."

"Dear old Iceberg,

"What do you know? Perkins swears I'm going to marry him! Now how could I marry him when I don't like him, and besides, Jerry's in the world somewhere. Then, too, there's his red hair. I can't stand a man with red hair being sentymantal. Only collidge stujents can get away with that junk—the rest know too much to have it sound nacheral.

"Last night I tried to shake him. I said I had a nuther date that I was going to meet in the hotel parlor. But he watched me get my key to go upstairs, and there wasn't no John *in* the parlor, so he sent a bell-boy to my room to say Mr. Perkins was waiting to take me out to supper. Say, that man ought to succed at anything, oughtent he, Hetty?

"We went to the Athenian Room. Dub! Everybody else was all diked out, and I was just in my tailor suit and velvet Tam, because I thought I wasn't going no place. Munson was there. She had on her Paradise. I made Perky order wine just to put her in her place. All she was getting was sloe gin rickies.

"When we got back to the hotel it was kind of dark by the elevator, and Perky kissed me. Hetty, I give you my word, his lips was like sandpaper. I never could stand them sandpaper lips. 'How dare you, sir?' I says real hotty, and slid into the elevator. Thank goodness we're going on the road next week.

"Your loansome pal,
"Dolly."

Another post-card came from St. Marysburg, labeled "The Methodist Church." The inscription read, "Hope you've shaken your Jonah. Granny not so well. Only one picture-show in town, and that's bum. Lots of love, Hester."

THE next week "Juliet of Joliet" went on tour to dazzle some of the Western cities. Doll-Baby's letter was headed Rome Hotel, Omaha.

"Dear Hetty,

"Wonders will never cease. Perkins has follered the show here. I don't speak to him any more, but every place I stir he follers me at a respectable distance and looks moarnful. It makes me awful nervous, but I can't sit up in the room all the time—I'd go crazy.

"For heaven's sake, Hetty, if you don't tell me what to do, I'll have to write to Beatrice Fairfax. I wish Pat Banks, that wardrobe woman we used to have, hadn't got married. She'd tell me.

"Your worried pal,
"Dolly."

From far-away Ohio came this scrap of advice, written with the St. Marysburg grammar-school as a background:

"Don't pay no attention to him. Flirt with other Johns."

"I have flirted with other Johns," wrote Doll-Baby in desperation, this time from Kansas City, "but it don't do a bit of good.

"He sends me flowers and baskets of fruit, and I just give them to the maid or anybody that happens to be around. I even gave some to Munson!

"Hetty, come on back. I need to be took care of.

"Your pal,
"Dolly."

But Hester's answer was a telegram: "Doctor says Granny can't last week out love to all."



"I'll tell you a secret. I left him, but I love him still."

THE next few days were full of misery for Dolly. She remained indoors as much as she could to escape the ubiquitous Perkins, but in the evening she was obliged to go to the theater, and then he followed almost at her elbow, the picture of vapid, harmless, but thoroughly annoying despair.

"If only he'd insult me!" Dolly was crying as she told her story to the comedian the last night of the company's engagement in Kansas City. "Then I could call a policeman. Or if I was going to get insulted, why couldn't it be by a handsome devil instead of a cross-eyed slob with red hair?" She gave way to her grief and sobbed bitterly.

Garson's fat sides shook with laughter. "Oh dear, oh dear!" was all he could say, "you and your Johns!"

Doll-Baby turned away sadly. No one took her seriously; her troubles were a joke to people.

Slowly she took off her make-up, got into her street clothes, and went to keep her appointment with a young Westerner, knowing that a red-headed "gloom" would be following every step of the way, looking "moarnful." Expensive food was eaten listlessly, the "gloom" sitting at a near-by table. Waiters were tipped and wraps adjusted tenderly: the "gloom" followed at a "respectable" distance. And then—but here is Dolly's own version of what happened:

"Hetty!" she wrote. "Darling Hetty!

"I'll try to tell it as it happened, but it's awful hard to keep from telling the first last and vicey verso.

"Last night I'd been having a bite after the show at the Baltimore,—not the Baltimore Lunch, Hetty, but the dandy big Baltimore Hotel,—and then I started for my own hotel. I've been doing my own stockings and hankerchiefs for two weeks to save up, but I couldn't quite make the Baltimore. Well, I had said good night to the Kansas City kid that was with me and was going up the steps, when little Perkins appears on the scene and grabs me by the arm.

"'You must listen to me,' he says through his teeth. I give a little scream, and up steps a man out of nowhere and hands him a wallop. Perky sneaks off,

leaving the man and me looking at each other kind of foolish. We couldn't see each other very well, of course, because it was pretty dark, but anyway I *felt* foolish.

"Will you please come inside the lobby, mister, so I can thank you more proper?" I says. And the man says, 'Dolly!' When I heard that voice, I simply melted into his arms. It was my Jerry! The only man I could ever really see with field-glasses!

"He's in the advertising bizness out here in Kansas City. Oh, well, Kansas City aint such a bad place to live in. I've told Jerry all about you and how good you've been to me, and he says you must come and make us a long visit just as soon as your grandmother gets well or something.

"Your happy and devoted

"Dolly."

HETTY'S answer several days later held something of a surprise.

"Dear Dolly and Jerry,

"I'm awful glad you're together again, because Dolly certainly ought to be took care of, and now you wont need me any more. Granny died last Saturday. She left me the cottage. It has a yard, and I can raise flowers in the front and vegetubbles in the back.

"Don't faint! I'm going to marry the doctor. He's the only man who's ever asked me who wasn't married already!"

A Story by J. M. Barrie

All those who loved "Peter Pan," "The Little Minister" and "Sentimental Tommy" will appreciate the announcement that the first story by Barrie to be published in years will be published complete in the November issue of The Red Book Magazine.

A Delightful Series by Maude Radford Warren

A series of short stories of a boy who throws off diffidence and stalks into social control by the simple expedient of changing his facial aspect, begins in the November issue with the story of

"The Glasses with the Black Horn Rims."

Don't miss these unusual features in the November issue of The Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands October 23rd.



A Vision in 159

A story of J. Hollister Benedick, the freshest hotel clerk on the B. C. & L.

By Freeman Tilden

Author of "The Dramatic Cricket," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HORACE TAYLOR

THERE is a strong unwritten law among the hotel clerks along the line of the B. C. & L. It relates to that interesting, even romantic, accessory of a country-town hotel—the cigar-case. Next time you stop off at Maysville, and register at the Mansion House, it will be worth your while to look over the cigars contained in the glass case at the right-hand side of the registry-book. You will see two boxes of five-cent cigars. You will never see anybody buy a five-cent cigar, and yet the boxes are regularly depleted. There is a mystery in this; but inasmuch as this is not a mystery story, it shall not delay our march.

Of ten-cent cigars there are boxes

enough. The ten-center is the personification of good taste, probity and solidity. When you buy a ten-cent cigar out of that show-case, your standing is fixed; and unless you commit some unusual crime, like entering the dining-room for supper at twenty-nine minutes past seven, you have a right to expect all the courtesies of the house.

Then there is a box of two-for-a-quarters. These cigars are avowedly for millionaires, automobile parties and confidence-men. It has been said that there was, for some years, a box of cigars in this show-case intended to retail at twenty-five cents each. You may believe this or not, as you choose.

To get back to the unwritten law, it is this: that hotel clerks, ex officio and

perquisitely speaking, are entitled to smoke ten-cent cigars out of this case. No proprietor has ever been bold enough to suggest five-centers to his clerks. On the other hand, it would be a very unusual state of affairs that would warrant a clerk in removing one of the two-for-a-quarter brand.

Yet, one afternoon about five o'clock, of a bleak, rainy, autumn day, J. Hollister Benedick, night-clerk at the Mansion House, did openly and with full knowledge of the seriousness of his breach, remove from the aforesaid showcase a two-for-a-quarter cigar; and did further convey said cigar to his mouth and apply a match thereto, in defiance of and contumely toward said unwritten law. Even as he did this unspeakable thing, J. Hollister apologized to the empty room, by saying, doggedly, "I've got to celebrate somehow."

It was the first time that J. Hollister had ever been in full-fledged control of a hotel. Weatherbee, the proprietor, had gone away that morning, to be gone a week; and the young night-clerk had progressed so far in the good opinion of his employer that Hopkins, the old day-clerk, was passed over and J. Hollister placed in charge. Mr. Weatherbee's instructions to the night-clerk had been brief and meaningful. "Don't google at the waitresses, Benedick," he had said, "and look out for beats and bums."

And ah! the irony of existence! For while J. Hollister was celebrating his new honors with a forbidden type of weed, a beat was on his way out of the Mansion House, via the back stairs, and a bum was on his way in, via the B. C. & L. Ignorance, saith the prophet, is not a bliss, but a blister. J. Hollister leaned back luxuriously in Weatherbee's swivel chair, puffed his fifteen-cent cigar, and dreamed fifteen million-dollar dreams in fifteen minutes. Then the five-forty-six train arrived.

When the bus rolled up in front of the Mansion House, the traveling-men, who had walked the short distance from the station, were already flocking in. Maysville was a convenient stopping-place for most of them, and not only was the hotel better than most of those up and down the railroad, but there was noteworthy conviviality to be found there, said entertainment usually taking the form of auction pitch, "ten cents up and down."

"Hello, there!" cried Buster Quint, the biggest-hearted and best-natured man that ever sold crockery. "What's the news, Hollister?"

"Never any news in this burg till you get here, Buster," replied the night-clerk. "The whole population's taken laughing-gas."

"Well, I've got some news, but I don't



"I remember when George Diston could sell a bill of goods to a dyspeptic, if the man's house was on fire at the time and he wasn't insured."

know as you'll want to hear it," said Quint, and his usually rotund and cherubic countenance suddenly became serious. "Come over here a minute while I get some stuff out of my bag. There's a man I'm going to sell before I eat my supper, or bust a suspender."

The night-clerk went over to the table at the rear of the lobby. "It's about Diston," said Quint.

"Diston? Fallen off a train and run over, I suppose?"

"No; 'twould be better for him, I guess, if he had. He's on his way up here. I saw him down at the station."

"Soused?" asked J. Hollister.

"To the gills. Gosh, it's a shame, Hollister. You don't remember, but I do, when George Diston was just about the cleverest and finest fellow that ever bought a mileage. He could sell a bill of goods to a dyspeptic, if the man's house was on fire at the time and he wasn't insured. And decent? Say, he'd take off his shirt to help a fellow out of a hole. That's why the boys are all cut up about the rowdy stuff he's been pulling lately."

"Rowdy stuff is right," replied the night-clerk. "The boss gave me orders not to let him stay in this hotel again. It cost about twenty-five bones to fix up the stuff he broke last time he was here."

Quint sighed. "I haven't given you the worst yet," he continued. "Diston has been borrowing right and left and—well, he's gone the limit." He leaned over close and whispered to the night-clerk, "A bad check up in Newbury, at the Island House."

"No!"

"Yes. The boss of the Island House wouldn't prosecute, because he remembered Diston as he used to be. Tough, isn't it? Do you suppose there's any chance of his pulling himself together?"

J. Hollister snorted scornfully, with a vivid recollection of Diston's most recent visit to the hotel. "Pull himself together!" he cried. Nix. I've seen 'em before. Diston hasn't got the ghost of a show, believe me—not the ghost of a show."

"I'm afraid you're right. Well, he's on his way up here, I guess. It may take him some time to get here, though, at

the rate he was navigating a while ago."

"If he comes here," replied the night-clerk, "there isn't a room in the house."

Quint left the hotel, and J. Hollister went back to the swivel-chair and cigar, and found that in his excitement he had committed the nameless atrocity of letting a fifteen-center go out. "The poor devil!" he muttered to himself several times, thinking of Diston. But he had made up his mind that the Mansion House would be "full up" as far as the unfortunate traveling-man was concerned.

George Diston strayed into the hotel just as most of the travelers were sitting down, after supper, at the card-table. A five-handed game had started, and J. Hollister was standing looking on, when one of the men facing the door said, in a low tone, "There's Diston, now." The clerk turned and saw the man entering, and went immediately behind the desk.

It was a pitiable figure of a man that entered the lobby. Diston had not yet reached that state of decay that calls for laughter at its very grotesqueness. The very fact that he had managed to keep his person in good order, and maintain some of his old-time *bonhomie* and confident manner, was exactly what made sympathy go out to him. He walked over to the desk fairly steadily and said in a thick voice, "G'evening, Benedick; same ol' room, I s'pose?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Diston, but we haven't got a room in the house."

"What's here, convention?" asked Diston with a grin. Then he caught the look on the clerk's face, and the blood rushed into his own. "You mean you've got no room for me? Is that it?"

"I said we have no room," repeated the night-clerk.

"Yeh, I know you said that, but I want you to tell me what you mean," persisted Diston. As he confronted this unexpected event, his speech became clearer.

The night-clerk's face went a little white. There was no better-natured fellow in the world than J. Hollister; but he had made up his mind as to what had to be done. "I mean we don't want you here, Mr. Diston. I'm sorry. You might find a room over at the Lewis."



"A beat and a bum within ten minutes," he groaned.
"I'm some hotel-keeper—not."

"The Lewis!" cried Diston angrily. "I want you to understand I put up at the best. You give me a room or I'll make it hot for you."

J. Hollister grinned. He was glad that Diston assumed this pugnacious attitude. It gave the night-clerk a chance to get indignant. "Can that talk," he advised. "In the shape you're in, you couldn't make it hot for a cigar."

Diston eyed the clerk with the insulting eye of a connoisseur of hotel-clerks. "You're ab—solutely the freshest babe on this line, ab—solutely," he drawled.

"Ab—solutely true," replied the clerk, mimicking the drawl. "And here's something else that's ab—solutely true, Mr. Diston: You're a member of the down-and-out club, and you can't stop at this hotel. Get me?"

"Aw, that's pretty raw!" interposed one of the traveling-men sitting at the

table. Several others seemed to endorse the sentiment. Most of them had been "touched" heavily by Diston, but they forgot the fact in the face of his miserable predicament.

The clerk reddened, and made no reply.

Whether it was the forced brutality of the hotel-clerk, or the effect of the unexpected note of sympathy from his fellow travelers, something caused a flood of pent-up emotion to burst from Diston. He rubbed a hand across his eyes and stood for half a minute gazing down at his shoes. Then he straightened up and said, in a low voice: "Hollister, I apologize. I'm sorry I bawled you out. I guess I'm all in, as you say. I'm no boob and no baby. I can swallow my medicine. If you say the word I'll get out. But as this is my last week on the road, I'd be obliged if you'll put me up overnight. I'll pay you in advance. Will you?"

"I've got orders," stammered J. Hollister.

"I know, I know," interrupted Diston. "But just this once. Let me put in one more night here. This old place has been a regular hang-out for me for years. There'll be no rough-house. On honor."

"Gee, I don't know what to do," confessed J. Hollister. "But—yes, I'll let you have a room. I'll take a chance on getting the can from Weatherbee. You go in and eat something, and I'll see what I can do. I don't want the money in advance. I'll take a chance on you. Go ahead in now and put something on top of that Jersey lightning before it explodes."

Diston reached out his hand. "You're on the level, feller," he said. "I won't forget it."

J. Hollister somehow didn't see the hand, and Diston went awkwardly into the dining-room. "I'm afraid I won't forget it, either, if that guy cuts loose and balloons again to-night," said the night-clerk. . . . "Yes, Miss Gregg?" he continued, as an elderly woman, the housekeeper of the hotel, came up to the desk excitedly.

"Excuse me, Mr. Benedick," said the woman, "but I'm afraid that man in 159 has gone without paying."

"What?" yelled J. Hollister, leaping up from the chair he had just settled himself upon.

"Yes sir. In fact, I'm afraid he's done worse than that. I just found this note in his room. He told me this noon he didn't want to be disturbed till half-past five. When I went to the door I found it unlocked, so I went in. I found this note and his suit-case, and trunk, and — well, read this first, Mr. Benedick!" The night-clerk took the note. It was written on the hotel paper, in a distinct, rather graceful hand. It read:

To Whom It May Concern:

J. Hollister got just that far when he pounded his fist on the desk and cried, "Who the dickens did he think it *would* concern—jumping his board?" Then he went on with the note:

I'm very sorry to do this, but it is necessary. This is the first hotel bill I ever failed to pay, and you can believe it or not, it is true. I guess you make money enough, though, to live through it. I am leaving what stuff I have got here, and I am leaving Bunny. In my suit-case there is a paper that tells about Bunny. I wish I could keep her with me, but I can-

not. The stage is no place for her, anyhow. Yours resp'y,

B. VORYS.

(Formerly of Wide-Awake Minstrels. Now on the Bum, believe me.)

J. Hollister wiped the perspiration from his face. "A beat and a bum within ten minutes," he groaned. "I'm some hotel-keeper—not. I ought to be flopping



sinkers in the quick-lunch across the street!" Then he added, curiously, "I guess I see through this, all except about Bunny. Is there a rabbit up there in the room?"

"No sir; there's a little girl about three years old."

J. Hollister tried to state his feelings.



Up the stairs they all went, with J. Hollister in the lead.

He lacked the words. He reached into the cigar-case and took another fifteen-cent cigar, lighted it and puffed like a factory chimney for a moment before he trusted himself to speak. "Where's the paper that goes with the kid? And how the devil did she get into the house without anybody knowing it?"

"I think she was boarding with some people outside until this morning. Then Mr. Vose, or whatever his name is, brought her in. I didn't think anything about it. Anyway, here's the paper."

When J. Hollister finished reading the statement indicated by the departed-but-not-deceased Mr. Vorys, he knew as much as there was to be known about Bunny. Bunny's mother, a Mrs. Dahlstrom, had been, with her husband and Vorys, a company of jugglers. They were second-rate performers, just good enough to do split-week stands with the moving-picture shows. The father of the little girl had died in a city up-State; several weeks afterwards the mother died; the child had been left with Vorys. That good-hearted man, almost penniless, had cared for Bunny as well as he could until the last moment. He could not discover that the child had any rela-

tives, so, as he said, "I am going to drop her in some hotel, hoping that she may get a good home." And all the while J. Hollister was reading the document, growing more and more angry and perplexed every moment, Bunny was asleep in 159.

The night-clerk seized the telephone. "Police-station," he cried to the operator. "Hello. Police-station? This is the Mansion House, Benedick talking. Send right over and get a three-year-old baby that's been left on our hands? What? What's she charged with? How the devil do I know? Milk, I s'pose. What? You aint got anything to do with foundlings? Why—by George, they've rung off! Now what do you know about that? What are we going to do, Miss Gregg?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied that lady, with the placidity of a person not responsible for a disaster.

J. Hollister had another idea. He called the overseer of the poor. This was a better lead. At first the overseer said he didn't see what the town had to do with the child, that the town had enough paupers on its hands as it was, but finally he promised to come over to the hotel some time the next morning.

"Will you come up and look at the little girl, Mr. Benedick?" asked the housekeeper.

"I will not," said the night-clerk, decidedly. "Is she yowling?"

"No, indeed; she's asleep, the poor little dear."

"Poor little dear is right, until she begins to cat-call," grunted out the night-clerk. "Then we'll have the boys tumbling downstairs in negligee, to find out what the riot is about." In spite of himself, J. Hollister had to grin at the picture of a score of angry traveling-men, all protesting at once. Then, suddenly, another idea struck him so forcibly that he dropped into the chair and began to laugh. The housekeeper turned away, but J. Hollister stopped her, saying, "Say, Miss Gregg, can you prod kids without hurting 'em?"

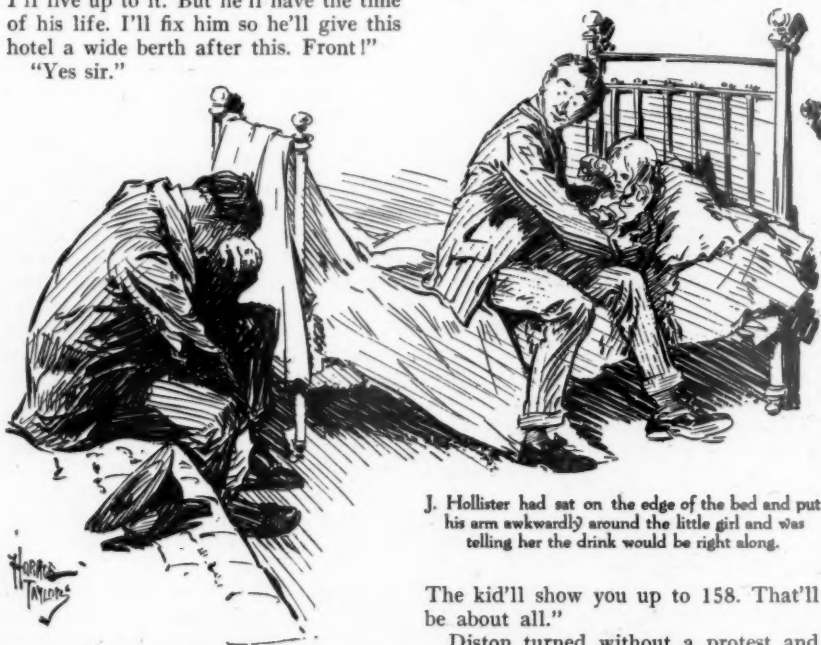
"Can you *what*?"

"Prod 'em. Make 'em give that blood-curdling yell I've heard now and then. Can that be done without really hurting 'em? See the idea?"

The feminine in Miss Gregg asserted itself at the mere suggestion of such a barbarous proceeding. "You leave the poor little thing alone," she said, as she went away. "Likely enough she'll do all the crying necessary without being helped any."

"By George, I've got it," cried the night-clerk, whacking the desk with his fist. "I oughtn't have let that Diston feller stay here overnight; but so long as I was soft enough to promise him, I'll live up to it. But he'll have the time of his life. I'll fix him so he'll give this hotel a wide berth after this. Front!"

"Yes sir."



J. Hollister had sat on the edge of the bed and put his arm awkwardly around the little girl and was telling her the drink would be right along.

"Here's the key to 158. When Mr. Diston comes out, if he wants to go right up to bed, take him up, and watch your chance and lock him in. Lock him in! Get me?"

The bell-boy grinned affirmatively.

"I guess that'll be all for Mr. Diston," said J. Hollister.

The dining-room doors closed at seven-thirty. At about seven-forty J. Hollister went to the door and looked in. Diston was not there; and he had not come out through the office. "He must have gone out the side door," thought the clerk. "I wonder why?"

About nine o'clock J. Hollister got

the answer to this question. Diston came into the office considerably the worse for his latest excursion. He leered sheepishly at the clerk as he approached the desk and said, "Jush had to have one—one more, Mr. Benedick. Now I'll go to bed. Got my key?"

The night-clerk nodded quickly to the bell-boy, and then delivered himself of his mind. "Diston," he said, "you're no good. Understand? No good! You're the color that made the lemon famous."

The kid'll show you up to 158. That'll be about all."

Diston turned without a protest and followed the boy upstairs. When the boy came down he threw the key on the desk. There was a pitch game going on, and J. Hollister was soon absorbed in the contemplation of it.

At eleven the card-players went to bed. The eleven-sixteen brought no guests to the Mansion House. At eleven-thirty the sole remaining bell-boy was asleep in his chair.

"Gee, that's a quiet kid up there," said J. Hollister, looking at the ceiling. "Perhaps the joke's going to be on me. Maybe that rummy will get a good sleep, after all."

The night-clerk had hardly given

half-aloud utterance to the thought when there was a great creaking of the stairs, a pounding of descending boots, accompanied by a sound that was half a cry, half a choking sob. The next moment the form of Mr. Diston, fully dressed but badly crumpled, with a ghastly pallor on his face and perspiration visibly coursing down from his forehead, came into view at the top of the first flight.

"Benedick!" he cried, hoarsely. "Benedick! You there?"

"Well you—you—" replied the night-clerk. "How the devil did you—"

"Wait a minute," begged the man. "Lemme tell you. It's all up with me, boy. I've half expected it. I've known it would come. I'm all in. *I've seen something!*" He had unsteadily descended the flight, and made his way over to the desk. His hand, which he held out before him, trembled so much that it almost beckoned.

"Seen something, you rowdy!" snorted the night-clerk. "Of course you have. What did you expect? What was it? A pink elephant with green ears? Or was it a two-legged dog in a hobble-skirt? Now I give you warning, Diston: the minute you start anything, I telephone for the police."

"Don't talk that way, Benedick!" pleaded Diston, and the night-clerk suddenly became aware that the man before him was in no ordinary condition. "I tell you I've seen something—*something unnatural*. I've had a vision."

"A vision? A vision of what?" the clerk snapped. "A vision of a distillery?"

Diston paid no attention. He seemed not to hear the other. He spoke in a slow, strained tone, as though weighing each word, and the effect was such as to make goose-pimples hop around on J. Hollister's arms and legs. "I've seen an angel!"

"You've seen a—what's the matter, Diston? Hadn't I better send for the doctor?" The clerk was getting frightened.

"I don't know. Maybe. But wait. I've not only seen it—not only that; but it spoke. *It spoke to me!* That's good enough."

Diston let his hand fall on the cigar-

case, which began to rattle like a loose window in a gale. "Don't do that!" shouted J. Hollister. "Take your hand off there! You've got me going too. Speak up! What's all this, anyway?" The janitor had awakened, and so had the lone bell-hop. They were watching Diston, open-mouthed and with scared faces.

"When the boy left me in the room," said the traveling-man, "I sat down on the edge of the sofa that's on one side near the door. My head was pretty bad, so I stretched out, thinking I'd get up in a minute and take off my clothes. I must have gone right to sleep. Well, all of a sudden, something woke me up. I don't know just what it was, whether it was a voice, or a light, or what. But there was a lamp shining into the room from another room on the ell of the house, and it made just enough light so I could—so I could see it. It was standing on the bed. It was in white. It was looking at me—I *think* it was looking at me. And it said—it said—"

Diston's mouth was open, but his voice failed him. The night-clerk knew what was necessary. He dived in back of the desk and came up with a bottle, out of which he poured a stiff drink into a water-glass. Diston drained it and shuddered. "You're a life-saver, Benedick," he muttered.

"What did it say?" asked the night-clerk.

"*'Drink!'*" Diston got the word out with difficulty. "That's all it said—just that one word—*'Drink!'*"

"I jumped up and grabbed the handle of the door," Diston went on, after a moment. "It was locked. I pulled it open some way—and got down here. I don't know how I got here; at first my legs wouldn't work—just the same as when you're trying to run away from something in a dream."

"What did you say it said?" asked the clerk.

"*'Drink.'* That's all—just that one word. And that's why I know I'm all in. *Drink* is what's the matter with me. It's a sign. Something's going to happen. I guess I'm all done."

"You've said the truth," thought J. Hollister. The night-clerk was thinking

much and quickly. He was certain, in the first place, that he was dealing with a completely disordered brain. His first thought was toward the police, but he knew how Mr. Weatherbee hated any notoriety for the hotel, and he tried to think of some other way out.

Suddenly the night-clerk said, "You know as well as I do there's nothing up in that room, Diston." The other man's hands twitched nervously, but he did not answer.

"Just to show it," went on the night-clerk, "we'll all go up to 158 and have a look. What do you say?"

At first Diston refused, but the night-clerk, with cajolery and threats, finally prevailed on him. Up the stairs they all went, J. Hollister in the lead, followed by the bell-boy, who was followed by the janitor. Diston, wheezing, brought up in the rear. At the first landing Diston stopped and showed signs of going down stairs again, but J. Hollister arrested him with a sharp order.

They reached the top story and went along the dimly lighted corridor till they arrived in front of 158. J. Hollister was not particularly superstitious, but he could hear his heart thump as he tried the door. It was locked.

"This door's locked," whispered Hollister to the janitor. "What the devil does this mean? Diston never came out through the keyhole. Hanged if I aint getting loony myself! How in thunderation—"

At that moment J. Hollister was interrupted by a noise that sent all four of them instinctively closer together. It was not a cry, not a shout, but a kind of complaining, sobbing wail, that might come from a child in pain. "Good God!" cried Diston. "Get me down out of here quick! There's that thing again!"

"Wait a minute! Hold on to him!" commanded J. Hollister to the janitor. "I've got a line on this thing now. Lemme try this other door!" He stepped along the corridor to the next door, number 159, and turned the knob. The door swung in at a slight pressure. There was an electric button beside the door, and the clerk switched it on. Simultaneously the other three persons jammed together at the entrance, with Diston

struggling feebly between the bell-boy and the janitor. The room was now, compared to the dimness of the corridor, flooded with light.

"Wow!" hoarsely whispered J. Hollister. "There's your angel, Diston!" He pointed to the bed. The bedclothes were in disorder. From under a single sheet, which showed the outlines of the body of a child, there peeped a fluffy mass of yellow hair. J. Hollister approached the bed quietly and looked intently at the little figure there. Then he beckoned to the others. "It's name is Bunny," whispered the clerk, briefly. Then he turned to the bell-boy and softly growled, "Can't you read figures, you bonehead? Didn't I tell you to put him in 158?"

The boy grinned sheepishly. "I couldn't unlock 158," he said, "so I shoved him in here. I didn't know it was occupied."

Diston had wilted down on the sofa. Suddenly the little yellow head on the bed, aroused by the talking in the room, lifted up. A pair of tear-stained eyes looked hazily, sleepily, at the men. Then a piteous little voice cried, "D'ink. Wanna d'ink. Bunny wanna d'ink."

"She wants a drink," cried J. Hollister. "Here, kid, slide for the kitchen and get some milk. Bring up a quart. Bring up two quarts. Bring up anything you see. Grab off a pie— How about this, Diston? Here's your angel that hollers 'drink!' What do you think of her?" J. Hollister had sat on the edge of the bed and put his arm awkwardly around the little girl, and was telling her the drink would be right along.

Diston muttered the word "drink" stupidly. That was all he said. The reaction was too much for him.

"Put that guy in where he belongs," J. Hollister told the janitor, "and I'll tend to Bunny."

TWO months afterwards, J. Hollister was standing behind the Mansion House desk. He was smoking a cigar, but it was a ten-center. The period of wild abandon during which he had raided the fifteen-centers, had passed. The five-forty-six hooted at the yard-limit, twenty minutes late, which was



"Her name's Evelyn Diston now, Hollister."

early for the B. C. & L. After a while the 'bus rolled to the door, and the first man to enter the office was George Diston.

Diston looked well. He was flesh-colored under the eyes, instead of bottle-green, and he looked like a successful traveling-man, which he had been before and was again. He stuck out his hand to J. Hollister, who shook it warmly. "Room for me?" asked Diston.

J. Hollister actually blushed. He remembered. "The best in the house, Mr. Diston," he replied. Then a pause. Then he asked, "Er—how is Miss—Bunny?"

Diston smiled a broad smile. "Her name's Evelyn Diston, now, Hollister. Of course, you can call her Bunny, though, if you want to. Say, she's a corker. My sister thinks just as much of her as she would of her own, if she had any. I'm 'crazy to finish the

week and beat it back home, to have some fun with her. That's me."

J. Hollister had nothing pertinent in mind to reply, so he was, for once in his life, wise enough to say nothing.

Diston took the night-clerk by the arm and led him out from behind the desk and over to the window. He pointed out at the narrow, muddy street.

"What's that out there?" he asked.

"What's the joke?" replied J. Hollister. "That's the street, aint it?"

"Sure. And there's the gutter, too. Well, I don't like to look at the gutter, but I do now and then, for medicine. That's where I'd have been now if it hadn't been for—"

"Bunny," broke in the clerk.

"Yes—and I guess you had something to do with it yourself."

And J. Hollister, "the freshest hotel-clerk on the B. C. & L.," actually blushed for the second time in one day.



"What is it, Henri?" asked the Marquise. She put up her glasses to stare at the figure on the stage.
—"The Joyous Lady."

The Joyous Lady

SHE was a very attractive person, but when she visited her brother, who was a priest, she caused excitement A charming story by a talented writer new to Red Book readers.

By Philip Gibbs

THE Abbé Fraquet, who was the handsomest man, as well as the best beloved, in Avignon,—do you know that old town of Provence where the Palace of the Popes gleams white upon the river, and where all the houses are washed with different coats of color?—stood with his hands behind his back, staring at some flaming posters newly posted on the blank wall of the Théâtre des Variétés. His broad-brimmed felt hat was pushed to the back of his head, so that the sun was full upon his bronzed face, and he remained there motionless for several minutes as though these picture placards had put a spell upon him.

They announced the coming, for one night only, of the famous Mimi La Joyeuse, from the Folies Bergères of Paris, described as "the most enchanting dancer and most audacious comédienne of France." Above these words, printed in big black letters, was a three-color portrait of the lady in a costume which was hardly proper for the gaze of a young French priest so modest and so simple as the Abbé Fraquet. For, to tell the truth, the costume did not conceal very much of that dainty figure and a roguish, smiling face which was now being exhibited on all the boardings of this provincial town.

"For one night only," said the Abbé, speaking aloud. "In a week's time! . . . *Mon Dieu!*"

He turned quickly, quite pale beneath his bronze, when a gay voice laughed behind him:

"Ah, Monsieur l'Abbé! That naughty little lady shocks you, eh?"

It was Colonel Bernadin, in his sky-blue uniform of the Chasseurs, with black boots which shone like polished metal and spurs like stars at his heels. He brushed up his white mustache and laughed in his throat.

"Poor child!" said the Abbé. "Perhaps she has the good God in her heart in spite of—"

The Colonel did not allow him to finish his sentence.

"In spite of her reputation, eh? A shameless hussy, I expect, like the rest of them. My young comrades have taken all the front seats, the rascals. They've heard about her from Paris, where they say she is prodigious. I have a good mind to stay away, as a moral protest, though, on my soul, it is dull here in Avignon, so that it would be a great sacrifice."

He saluted graciously—the Abbé and he were good friends—and proceeded down the high street of Avignon with a smile for the bare-armed girls who were washing clothes in the doorways and singing as they worked.

THE Abbé paced slowly in the opposite direction toward his own house next to the church of Ste. Geneviève. Three times he passed other placards flaunting the fame and beauty of Mimi la Joyeuse, and each time he turned his head to look up at that girl's face with its carmined lips and seductive smile.

An old lady with one hand on the arm of a tall young man who was dressed *à l'anglaise* in a light suit and a straw hat, spoke to him as he was again glancing at one of these colored posters.

"My dear Abbé, it is infamous that our town should be made a picture gallery for a young woman like that! It is the result of having a Government of Syndicalists and Free-thinkers. There is no morality in this poor France of ours."

"Ah, Marquise," said the young priest, rather nervously, "I have learned to find virtue in unexpected places. Perhaps even that child there has more innocence than the world thinks of her. Who knows? . . . What do you say, Vicomte?"

He turned to the tall young man, who was slapping his leg with a silver-knobbed cane.

"I'm afraid the virtue of Mimi la Joyeuse is not so great as your charity, Monsieur l'Abbé! Still, I don't pretend to have special knowledge on the subject, not being acquainted with the lady."

"A good thing, too, little one," said the old lady, tapping him on the arm. "Don't you let me catch you near the petticoats of dancing girls, my son, or there will be a quarrel in the château of Miraval."

"I've no temptations that way, *ma mère*," said the young man, smiling at the Abbé. Then he added, more gravely. "In any case, a poverty-stricken fellow like myself can't afford such luxuries."

The old lady laughed, in a high, silvery voice.

"Then our poverty is a blessing, my son. But that is a scandalous confession to make before our worthy Abbé."

"Oh, he reads me like a book!" said the young man.

"And with as much admiration as I read your verses," said the Abbé, placing his hand affectionately on the young man's shoulder. "When are you going to let me see your latest poem, Henri?"

"Oh, I'll look in one day," said the Vicomte Miraval. "I've been slogging away at a metrical romance. I would like your judgment."

"Good!"

The Abbé saluted his friends and walked on to his presbytery. His house-keeper met him in the passage. Her old pippin face was lighted up by excitement. She had her hands to her bosom, and spoke in a whisper, breathlessly:

"There's a demoiselle to see you in the parlor, Monsieur l'Abbé. A stranger to Avignon, and from Paris by the look of her little shoes with their high heels. Heaven! but I don't know if it's safe for you to see her. These Paris hussies—"

The Abbé Fraquet said, "Silence, woman!" more sternly than he had ever spoken before to Madame Vernet, and strode toward the door of his parlor. For a moment he hesitated before turning the handle. Then he went into the room and shut the door quietly behind him.

"Suzette, my little one!"

"Little brother! Little big brother!"

A GIRL with wonderful brown hair and a piquant face, with a roguish smile, sprang up from an old leather armchair in which she had been sitting curled up before the window, made a rush at the priest, flung her arms about him, kissed him again and again on each cheek, and laughed and cried at the same time.

"My dear sister!" he said; and then, "My poor child!"

She stepped back from him and held him at arm's length, giving queer little squeals of excitement, and looking at him, up and down, up and down, while tears fell from her laughing eyes.

"Armand! . . . After ten years! . . . To think that I have a brother like this! . . . Who would believe it? What would they say in Paris if they knew that I have an abbé for my brother? They would refuse to believe that Mimi la Joyeuse—"

The Abbé Fraquet spoke in a subdued voice. In spite of the smile about his lips, and the tender emotion with which he had embraced his sister, he had a scared look.

"I beg of you, little one, do not speak that name so loud. Here, in Avignon, you must be Suzette Fraquet again."

"Yes!" said the girl, "it will be good to go back to the old days—before our quarrel, Armand—when I was little Suzette Fraquet with yellow pigtailed and a short frock as white as my soul. *Armand! mon camarade!*"

She sat down in the big leather chair again, and gave a little cry of joy.

"It is good to be here. It feels like home again. . . . Home! And I have had no real home for ten years of glitter and glare, and rush and riot. How quiet it is! It's a little sanctuary from the roar of rotten old Paris. Oh, I'm glad I came a week before my time! I'll be very good, dear Armand. I left all my naughtiness behind."

"Why have you come so soon, Suzette?" asked the Abbé. "I saw on the placards you are playing for one night only—a week hence."

"I am taking a week's holiday," said Suzette. "I said to my manager last night, 'If I do not rest a little, I die.' As he did not desire my death (because I make a lot of money for him), he bowed very politely, and said, 'By all means, my dear lady. A trip to Boulogne, perhaps, for the week-end?' I laughed in his face. 'No, my friend,' I said, 'not a week-end, but a week, a full, perfect week before my appearance at Avignon on the tenth of this month.' 'Impossible!' he cried, panic-stricken. But as I do not know that word, I went straight from the theater to the station, and—here I am! I am going to stay with you for a week, Armand, and we are going to have joyous days together, just as in the old days when you and I played hide-and-seek in the woods at Nîmes."

"Stay with me—for a week?" asked the Abbé. He looked round the barely furnished room in a doubtful way. "Do you mean in this poor house of mine?"

"Where else, little big brother? After

ten years, when I forget you a little, I want you all to myself again. I want to remember—all sorts of things. You shall preach to me, and give me moral instructions, and teach me how to know evil from good, which is not easy, sometimes."

She laughed at him, as though the sight of this handsome young priest were very droll.

"Suzette Fraquet shall forget Mimi la Joyeuse for one little week of peace, and Monsieur l'Abbé and Mimi la Joyeuse shall be the best of comrades. It will be magnificent!"

"Suzette," said the Abbé, "I implore you not to use that other name in this house. There would be a great scandal in Avignon if it were known that the sister of the Abbé was—the dancing girl whose portrait is placarded about the town. You understand, do you not?"



"In Paris great gentlemen think it an honor if they can have one word with La Joyeuse."

SUZETTE replied a little impatiently, and with a sudden look of pride.

"Oh, là, là! In Paris great gentlemen think it an honor if they can have one little word with la Joyeuse, if they can boast of knowing her. They

send me flowers—every night my dressing-room is full of them. There are crowds outside the theater to see me drive up in my automobile."

"Your automobile!" said the priest.

"I have three," said Suzette calmly. "And if I get tired of my own, there are many others at my disposal. I have but to lift my little finger,—like this,—and a dozen would be at the stage door to take me home, or outside my flat near the

Champs Elysées to take me to the Bois. In Paris, *mon cher*, Mimi la Joyeuse is a very great lady, and is not ashamed of her name."

"In Avignon," said the Abbé, "there is a different point of view. They are old-fashioned folk here. What is famous in Paris is—"

He hesitated and did not finish his sentence, but spread out his hands with a significant gesture.

It was Suzette who finished his sentence.

"Infamous in Avignon?" she asked quietly, and this time there was no laughter in her eyes as they became moist with tears.

The Abbé did not answer, but lifted one of her hands and touched it with his lips, as though he could not deny what she had said, but assured her of his brotherly love.

Suzette drew her hand away quickly, and spoke with passionate satire:

"Oh, yes, I am infamous! My name is a scandal in any respectable society. So you think, do you not? Good women draw their skirts back when I pass, lest my touch should infect them. But they come to the theater to see me, eh? They will pay much money to get a good seat so that they may hear my latest audacities. They laugh and shrug their shoulders and say, 'Quite shameless, but amusing, *n'est-ce pas?* An outrageous little hussy, but pretty, don't you think? Of course she is utterly immoral, like the rest of such creatures.' Oh, I know they speak of me like that in Avignon, and in other places not so far from Paris."

"My dear sister," said the young Abbé, in a broken voice, "the world is cruel in its verdicts, and alas! your way of life is an open door to scandal."

"The world!" cried Suzette. "I scorn the world. I do not care that for it!"

She snapped her fingers so that it sounded like the crack of a whip in the priest's bare parlor.

"But I cared for one man's faith in me," she said, with a sob in her throat. "I believed that in spite of our quarrel you wouldn't think the worst of me, Armand. I believed that you remembered the innocence of the girl who was once

your little comrade in the old home."

"I remembered," said the priest. "I remembered you in my prayers, Suzette."

"Ah, but you are like the world," said Suzette. "You think my soul is black because my skin is fair. You think I am a daughter of the devil because God gave me grace and beauty and a laughing heart, and dancing feet."

"No, no," said the Abbé Fraquet. "You are cruel to say those things."

"I was a fool to come," cried Suzette. "I don't go as a rule where I'm not wanted. . . . They want me in Paris, where I have many friends."

She put her hands on the mantelshelf, where a black ebony crucifix stood, and laid her forehead against the cold marble, and wept.

THE Abbé Fraquet came close to her and put his arm about her.

"Little sister, I have wanted you. Only God knows how I have wanted you, how I have suffered because I was parted from you and could not protect you from the evil of life. Not a day has passed without prayers rising from my lips for a brown-haired girl with a laughing heart, with a rash, wild, passionate heart, alone in the devil's playground of Paris. . . Shall I tell you how I have laid flowers at Our Lady's altar and said, 'Keep her spotless as these lilies?' Shall I tell you how I have groaned aloud when I have heard of the tragedy of some poor girl in Avignon, and cried out, even in my sleep, so that I have waked shuddering: 'May Suzette be saved from such a fate!' Suzette, you are no longer a child. You know the risks you have taken so lightly, so much against my wish. If you have escaped from the perils that have threatened the beauty of your soul, I will go down on my knees before you to ask your pardon, because sometimes I believed you had lost your purity of heart."

Suzette turned and put her hand upon the shoulder of the tall man who spoke with the simplicity of a child. She drooped her head before him.

"I am no longer innocent, Armand. I know the evil of life, and of men—and of Paris. A dancing girl in Montmartre

is not sheltered like a schoolgirl behind convent walls. But I am not—I swear to you—a vile woman. If a good man loved me—dear God, good men do not come my way!—I could go to him without shame. Look, I swear it by that little cross, Brother.”

She took up the ebony crucifix and touched her lips with it.

“*A Dieu soit merci.*” said the priest.

She put the cross down again, and turned with laughing eyes. It was strange how quickly her moods changed.

“You will let me stay, then?”

“Always, if you will,” said the Abbé Fraquet.

He went swiftly to the door, and called out loudly.

“Madame Vernet! Madame Vernet!”

“Immediately, Monsieur l’Abbé!” came the shrill old voice of the old housekeeper. She came panting up the passage into the parlor—the boards of which she had polished until they shone like a mirror.

“Madame Vernet,” said the Abbé with grave dignity, “this is my dear sister, Mademoiselle Suzette Fraquet.”

“The sister of Monsieur l’Abbé!” said the old woman. “It is the first time that I have heard of her.”

There was an enormous incredulity in her voice, as though she had known all the Abbé’s life, and could not believe the revelation of this amazing secret.

“My sister,” said the Abbé, “will stay here for a week, for at least a week. I shall be glad if you will prepare a room for her and arrange everything for her comfort.”

“Oh!” cried Suzette, “I have not come to give everybody trouble! I remember the day, Armand, when I played the part of *petite mère*. You have not forgotten? Madame Vernet, if you will let me help you, I will prove that I can make a bed and cook a dinner as well as any woman of France.”

“What! In those high-heeled shoes, my pretty one? And with those little white hands of yours?”—shaking her head doubtfully.

When Suzette went upstairs with her, the Abbé stood alone in his room, motionless, with his hands behind his

back, staring at the polished floor. “For one night only,” he muttered to himself. “All Avignon will know, after that night.”

He sighed deeply, but when he heard the bubbling laughter of Suzette in an upper room, he smiled and went closer to the door to listen. He had been lonely in this presbytery, with only old Madame Vernet, who bullied him. It was good to hear that laughter in the house. The years of his life rolled back, and he seemed to be once again in the old house at Nîmes where he and Suzette had been boy and girl together. He heard her scamper along the passage upstairs, just as she used to do, as a rogue with mischief in her eyes and flying pigtailed. She had come back after the wild years of her life, and he wished that he might keep her in this nest of his, under that old roof in Avignon where peace dwelt.

II

AFTER a little dinner which Suzette had helped to cook,—Madame Vernet had marveled at her skill in making a *sauce piquante* and her masterly touch with an *omelette aux fines herbes*,—the brother and sister sat together in the parlor, where for the first time there were flowers, arranged by Suzette, on the green cloth, between the tall brass candlesticks.

Suzette chatted about her life in Paris, cheerfully and frankly, giving little glimpses of the comedy of it, of the squalor that was often mixed with it, of the tragedy that sometimes lurked beneath its gayety, of its hardships, luxuries and temptations. It all seemed very natural to her,—even the triumphant success which had come to her after many disappointments seemed as natural now as the air she breathed,—but the Abbé Fraquet, smoking his pipe, kept on saying, “*Tiens! Tiens!*” with an air of amazement, and was startled, amused, saddened and shocked, with alternate emotions, at these revelations of human nature beyond his own experience. Yet he was thankful when he realized that this wild sister of his seemed to have escaped unscathed amidst many moral perils, and that at heart she

was still a child. She was rich and lived like a princess in Paris. The Abbé Fraquet was astounded when she mentioned her stupendous salary.

"Why, my child," he said, taking the pipe from his mouth and laying it down on the green cloth, "you earn more money in one year than the Marquise de Miraval has for her whole life. Yet she is one of the greatest ladies in France and belongs to one of the oldest families."

Suzette shrugged her shoulders and laughed. "I also am one of the great ladies of France, little brother. In my line of business there is only one who gets more money than I do. It is my dear Yvette Guilbert. As for your precious old Marquise, I dare say she is as poor as a church-mouse. She belongs to the past. I am one of the reigning queens—in the little kingdom of Montmartre."

"Hush!"—rising hurriedly from his chair, as there was a tap at the door, before Madame Vernet opened it, and spoke very solemnly, as though announcing an archangel.

"Monsieur le Vicomte de Miraval."

"My dear Abbé, I have taken you at your word! I have come to read my poem to you. I warn you—"

THE young man—who entered with gay words, throwing a black cape over a chair, as he advanced towards the Abbé—suddenly stopped, opened his black eyes wide with surprise as he saw Suzette, flushed very boyishly, and then bowed with a charming grace.

"A thousand pardons, Monsieur l'Abbé. I had no idea—"

"No, no," said the Abbé, almost as much embarrassed, and so nervous that his hand trembled as he placed it on the young man's shoulder. "I am delighted

that you have come. Allow me to present you to my sister, Suzette. She has come to stay with me for a few days."

The Vicomte de Miraval was too well bred to allow the look of surprise to remain in his eyes, though he was even more astounded because the Abbé had kept the secret of his beautiful sister so well—and so mysteriously. He bowed



"Oh, but you have no copy, perhaps," cried Suzette.

again, and murmured the words:

"Enchanted, mademoiselle!"

She gave him her hand with perfect simplicity and ease.

"My brother has spoken to me about his great friendship with you, and about your beautiful poetry, monsieur."

The Vicomte de Miraval laughed at this compliment.

"It is the poorest stuff, mademoiselle,

I assure you. And your brother is good enough to admire and not to criticise, so that I have an enormous respect for his judgment."

"Ah, but I must judge for myself!" said Suzette, smiling at the young man who had modesty as well as a sense of humor, and whose fine, delicate face and dark eyes gave him a noble look which she did not see among the men in Montmartre.

"Oh, no. I should not dare to read my poor lines before such a critic!" said Monsieur de Miraval.

Yet after many laughing protestations and denials, after Suzette had brought in some coffee, more fragrant than that of Madame Vernet's making, and after the Vicomte's first embarrassment had disappeared, he was persuaded to read his verses.

"They are in the style of an old troubadour's romance," he said, "and therefore tell of love."

"It is a good theme," said Suzette very gravely.

"Of which I know very little myself," said the Vicomte, with just a glint of merriment in his dark eyes. "But one of my ancestors was that Gerauld de Miraval who was the very famous minstrel and lover of the Queen Margaret of Navarre. I have made a feeble imitation of his passionate odes."

"Feeble or otherwise, we wait to hear them, Monsieur," said Suzette. "Brother, shall I light your pipe?"

So Henri de Miraval read his lines, a little shyly, while the Abbé Fraquet puffed his pipe, and while Suzette sat on the other side of the table, with her pointed elbows dug into the green cloth, and her chin in the flower-like cup of her hand.

BUT presently Suzette cried out in a voice of agony, "Oh, oh, I can't bear it!"

The young Vicomte was startled and abashed. He dropped his papers and stammered out a few words of apology.

"Suzette!" said the Abbé, shocked by this interruption.

"No, no!" cried Suzette, "I didn't mean to be unkind. This poem is so beautiful that it would witch the little

white soul out of my body if it were read in the right way. But, oh, Monsieur, you write so gloriously and read so abominably! Forgive me, and let me recite your lines."

"It would be a great honor," said the young man, recovering from his momentary discomposure. "I know that I do not put the right expression in my voice. It sounds so dull, so much of a monotone."

"Yes, yes, that is it!" said Suzette. "Listen, while I show you how I want it to sound in my ears and heart."

She took the papers, and drew a candle nearer, so that its rays fell upon them—and upon her glorious hair. She began to read, very softly at first, yet with strange and witching cadences in her voice; then louder, with the first thrill of passion in her tones; then with a fire and glow, as though all the words were warm with amorous emotion; and then plaintively, pleadingly, piteously, as the lover in the poem fell into despair because his love was hopeless; and at last rising to a great cry of gladness because in death he found the immortality of love.

The Abbé's pipe had gone out. Tears welled into his eyes and trickled down his thin bronzed face.

The Vicomte de Miraval sat like a man in a dream. But the color ebbed and flowed under his delicate skin, and there were flickering fires in his dark eyes, as they were fixed upon the girl's face.

WHEN Suzette came to that last cry of love triumphant and let the papers flutter to the cloth, and stood with a smile about her lips, the author of the poem drew a deep breath, as though waking from his dream.

Then he sprang up excitedly.

"Mademoiselle! Ten thousand thanks! It is superb! You are a great artist. You give a wonderful life to those poor lines of mine which seemed so dead and dull! How can I ever thank you for this recitation?"

"It is a revelation of your own genius, Monsieur. I did not write that poetry. I only gave expression to the beauty of it."

The Vicomte de Miraval stretched out his hand for his papers and touched them with his lips for a moment before replacing them in their envelope and offering them to Suzette.

"Mademoiselle, this is your poem. It owes all its music to you. If you would accept it as a small gift in return for a very precious memory—"

"Oh, but you have no copy, perhaps!" cried Suzette.

The young man hesitated, and then laughed.

"I am tempted to lie. It is a poet's privilege in such cases. Yet I will be honest. I have a dozen copies!"

Suzette echoed his laughter, more merrily, and tucked the papers in the bosom of her white bodice.

"Then I will take them, and I thank you for your honesty as well as for your gift."

After that the Vicomte did not stay very long. He seemed like a man who does not want to break a spell by overstaying his time. But when he left, he permitted himself to raise Suzette's hand to his lips and thanked her again for her enchanting recital.

"I live in an old château," he said, "worm-eaten and moth-eaten and poverty-stricken. But it was once the dwelling-place of Queen Margot and her ladies, when my ancestor, Gerault de Miraval, entertained them with his minstrelsy. My mother and I would be very proud if you would honor us with a visit, mademoiselle. It would seem as though one of those ladies of the olden time had come again to our house."

"I should be very glad to come, Monsieur," said Suzette.

"To-morrow my mother will call herself to ask you."

The Vicomte de Miraval bowed again, and then grasped the hand of the Abbé Fraquet, who came to the hall door with him.

"I cannot forgive you, my dear Abbé," whispered the young man.

"For what?"

"For hiding such an adorable secret."

The Abbé Fraquet laughed, but when he went into the parlor again, he sighed. He was wondering what would happen when the Vicomte de Miraval discovered

that Suzette had another name, and that she was better known in France, in the cabarets of Montmartre, in soldiers' barracks, in the glare of the boulevards of Paris, as Mimi la Joyeuse.

"He is a charming boy, your little Vicomte," said Suzette, yawning behind her hand.

"Yes," said the Abbé. "He is a very noble young man, and proud of his ancient name and family."

"Oh, là, là!" said Suzette. "Well, good-night, little big brother. I am as sleepy as an owl."

III

AS the week passed by on quick wings the Abbé Fraquet became possessed with a great anxiety. For each day brought Suzette nearer to that night when she was to appear in the Théâtre des Variétés at Avignon as Mimi la Joyeuse. It would then be impossible to conceal the identity of this little sister whose sudden appearance had startled and delighted all his friends.

He was conscience-stricken. He who loved simplicity and candor seemed to be playing a part of deception. Was it honorable, for example, he asked himself a thousand times, to hide the truth about Suzette from Colonel Bernadin?—who had come in one evening to play a game of *vingt-et-un*, but had stayed an hour longer than usual, flirting in his gallant way—he pleaded the privilege of white hair—with a young lady who, as he whispered to the Abbé, made him wish that he were younger by thirty years. What would the Marquise say when she knew that this young lady to whom she had been so gracious was no other than the dancing girl from Montmartre whose flaunting pictures on the walls of Avignon had shocked her sense of propriety?

The Marquise had come down from her château on the morning following her son's visit, and had tapped the Abbé on the hand with the handle of her black silk sunshade because he had not breathed a word to her about having a beautiful sister in Paris with whom, she vowed, she had fallen in love at first sight.

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"My dear," she said to Suzette, "it will rejoice my old heart if you will bring your pretty face and your laughing eyes to the Château de Miraval, where Henri and I lead a very quiet life."

"Oh, Madame la Marquise, I shall be charmed to come," said Suzette very politely. "Perhaps you will let Armand bring me to your house?"

The Marquise made a comical grimace at the Abbé.

"He shall come if he promises not to remind me of my sins, which I try so hard to forget."

THE Abbé Fraquet put on his best *soutane* on the afternoon when he walked with Suzette to the Château de Miraval on the other side of the river, near the broken bridge of Avignon, and Suzette herself, in a pale blue frock with a little blue bonnet and a lace parasol, was so delightful to see that her brother was abashed at the admiring looks bestowed upon her by the young lieutenants who passed them down the Grande Allée, and even by the old bourgeois who sat outside the café restaurants smoking their cigars under the striped awning and between the orange trees in their green tubs.

"It is a great honor to go to the Château de Miraval," said the Abbé. "I receive an invitation once a year, on the feast day of Madame la Marquise. I hope you do not feel nervous, little one?"

Suzette laughed very merrily.

"I am not afraid of the old lady, but the black eyes of Monsieur le Vicomte are a little alarming, perhaps."

Yet the black eyes of Monsieur the Vicomte were most respectful, and were filled with a queer shyness, when he took her hand and thanked her for this visit. He was rather silent, but quick to serve her, when she sat in the salon,—it had once been the boudoir of a French queen,—while Madame la Marquise presided at the tea-table, according to a habit which she had learned as a schoolgirl in England.

Suzette was perfectly at her ease. She chatted about the gay society of Paris as though she belonged to the most fashionable circles, and spoke with such famili-

arity of certain great personages in the capital—imitating their little tricks of manner and speech with a roguish wit which kept the old Marquise rippling with laughter—that the Abbé was almost dumb with surprise.

Presently Henri de Miraval sprang up, and said, "With your permission, *maman*, I will show Mademoiselle Fraquet some of the historic relics in this poor old château—that is, if she would care to see them."

"Oh, she will yawn at your old tales, my son," said the Marquise. "Pretty girls do not want to be bothered with old tapestries and hiding-places in stone walls."

But Suzette vowed that she was eager to wander round the château, with the Vicomte as her guide.

"We will go first," said the young man, "to the room where Gerault de Miraval recited that poem in the old Provençal tongue, which I put into modern French, but did not understand until you read it so enchantingly. As you know, he was the lover of Queen Marguerite."

THE Abbé was left alone with the Marquise. It was a *mauvais quart d'heure* for him, extending, indeed, to an awkward hour, for the old lady asked innumerable questions about Suzette which put his sense of truthfulness to a severe and agonizing test.

What was she doing in Paris?

She was studying music and art.

Why had he never mentioned her before?

Their lives had drifted apart. They had had a little quarrel some years ago.

Yes, he was often frightened at the thought of her living alone in Paris, far from his protection.

When Suzette came back with Henri,—the young man's eyes were shining, and Suzette's cheeks were flushed,—the poor Abbé was praying to God in his heart that he might be pardoned for his insincerity and that the Marquise would never discover the real facts about his sister's life.

"Mademoiselle Fraquet has been good enough to ask me to show her some of my other little poems," said Henri de

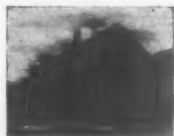
Defy wind, rain, snow, storm!

Can you imagine anything finer for winter time than it is to have a home evenly warmed, right up to the window panes where the little folks can "watch for daddy," or safely play on the warm floors—all rooms comfortable all day and night for all the folks, without a draft or chill in any spot? That is the home atmosphere which you can enjoy from a modern guaranteed outfit of



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Can be put in farm houses (no city water mains necessary.) Made in special types for cottages, and other homes, churches, schools, apartments, stores, hotels, etc.

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Ask also for catalog of the ARCO WAND—a successful set-in-the-cellar machine with iron suction pipe running to each floor.



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Miraval. "As she has promised to read them, I must obey. Perhaps you will allow me to call on you again this evening, my dear Abbé?"

How could the Abbé Fraquet refuse such a charming request? Yet when the Vicomte came, not only on that evening, but on every one of the five evenings which preceded Suzette's appearance at the Théâtre des Variétés, the Abbé had great fear in his heart. He was not so blind that he could not see the worship in the eyes of Henri de Miraval when he gazed upon Suzette. He was not so deaf that he could not hear the thrill in the voice of this young man when he spoke to Suzette.

And Suzette? The Abbé could not be quite sure whether Suzette had been touched at all by the adoration of this young man. She was pleased by his flattery. She laughed at his compliments; she teased him outrageously; and she made amends for her smiling satire by reading out his verses with so much emotion that the poet was raised to the seventh heaven.

ONLY once did Suzette reveal any hint of an uneasy conscience or of a distress in her shrewd little brain. It was on the afternoon before that evening when she was to appear as Mimi la Joyeuse before the people of Avignon. The Abbé had come home a little late for dinner, having made a round of visits in the poor quarters of the town. The parlor was filled with a purple twilight just before the darkness, and the Abbé, who came in quietly, did not see for a moment that Suzette was in the room. But when he saw that she was seated in the big leather chair with her arms outstretched across the table and with her face down on her arms, he made a slight movement, and instantly she sprang up and cried in a gay voice:

"You are late, *mon camarade*, and I have the hunger of a dog."

"It is dark here," said the Abbé, and he lighted the two candles on the table; and when he looked at Suzette again he saw that she had been weeping and that her eyes were still moist. He pretended not to have seen these signs of grief, and spoke cheerfully.

"Have you been alone all the afternoon, little one?"

"No," said Suzette. "I have been walking by the river—with the Vicomte de Miraval. He is a droll boy! He makes me laugh a good deal."

The Abbé was silent for a moment. He went to the mantel-shelf and fumbled for his pipe. Then suddenly he turned and spoke with a great fear in his voice.

"Suzette. . . . I am afraid. . . . Do not play with that young man, or break his heart. When he knows that you are Mimi la Joyeuse—"

"What then?" asked Suzette sharply. "What then, Armand?"

"My dear," said the priest, "he belongs to a noble family and has very high ideals of woman's place in life. It would be a frightful shock to him."

Suzette raised her head a little and stared at her brother angrily.

"A frightful shock? And why, I should like to know? He finds me very charming, does he not? He likes to hear me read his poems, *n'est-ce pas*? He sees a little beauty in my face, if I am not mistaken? He told me, only this afternoon, *mon camarade*, that he perceived a lovely nature shining through the windows of my eyes."

The Abbé took a deep breath.

"Did he tell you that?"

Suzette struck the tablecloth with the back of her hand.

"Why, in heaven's name, should I be less charming because sometimes I call myself Mimi la Joyeuse? Does that spoil my reading of his poems? Does it change my beauty into ugliness? Does it alter my nature so that a black soul looks through the windows of my eyes?"

"No, no," said the Abbé. "Nothing will change the sweetness of your soul, Suzette. Not even Paris has done that. Not even your life as a dancing girl."

"Armand," said Suzette, "Henri de Miraval has asked me to be his wife."

The Abbé gave a cry of amazement and alarm.

"Oh, my little one! Have you told him your secret? Does he know the truth about you?"

Suzette laughed in a queer way, which was something like a sob.

"—and then with just a few weeks more of Sanatogen"

On the road to health at last! And yet how impatient you are to be up and doing. But it is now, when the system is trying to rebuild its store of energy, that you will be most grateful for the reconstructive help of Sanatogen.

Sanatogen, you must know, is a natural food-tonic, combining purest albumen with organic phosphorus—thus conveying to the wasted system the vital elements to build up blood and tissues, and it is so remarkably easy of digestion that the most delicate—young and old—can take it with nothing but beneficial effects. It reawakens the appetite, assists digestion, and as a physician in "The Practitioner," a leading medical journal, says, "It seems to possess a wonderful effect in increasing the nutritive value of other food material."

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Madame Olive Schreiner,
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"Nothing that I have taken
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such a sense of vigor as
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"My daughter, who was
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has been greatly benefited
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improved, her weight in-
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"I told him to wait until after Saturday night, and then, if he asked me again, I would give him the answer of my heart."

"After Saturday night all Avignon will know your other name," said the Abbé Fraquet. "How shall I say my mass on Sunday morning, with all the whispers in the church? Oh, my dear, I am glad you came. This has been a happy week for me, but I wish I had had the courage to tell the truth at first. . . . This poor young man! The precious image he has made of you will be smashed to pieces. He will be broken-hearted!"

"Then you think he will not ask me again?" asked Suzette. She smiled with a scornful mouth, though her face was dead-white.

"As Suzette Fraquet he would ask you a hundred times," said the Abbé.

"But as Mimi la Joyeuse?"

The priest drooped his head.

"I think he will not ask you twice, my dear. You will forgive me? You know my love for you? But we must both face the truth, Suzette."

"Yes," said Suzette. "The truth! But it is sometimes very cruel, and some men are cowards in the face of it. . . . I wonder if Henri is a coward?"

A few moments later she was singing gayly in the kitchen and laughing lightly heartedly as she made an *omlette aux fines herbes* with Madame Vernet.

IV

IT was by Suzette's wish that the Vicomte de Miraval took a box at the Théâtre des Variétés on the night when Mimi la Joyeuse was to appear.

"I haven't the least desire to see the creature," said the Vicomte. "And I have a great desire to spend another evening with you in your brother's house."

"Oh, but I shall be at the theater too!" said Suzette.

"You are going?" said the young man. He spoke as though the idea shocked him a little.

"Yes, I have seen Mimi in Paris. She is a friend of mine."

"A friend!"

He could not disguise the fact that he did not approve of such a friendship.

But as she was going to the theater, he would go too. Perhaps he could prevail upon the Marquise to come, and they would share a box?

"Yes," said Suzette, "persuade Madame la Marquise to go. Tell her that Mimi la Joyeuse is not so wicked as they make her out to be, that she is quite amusing, and reveals the spirit of Paris in her songs. . . . But I will go alone to the theater—as it is so close to Armand's house. I will slip in and join you there."

So it was arranged, but Henri de Miraval was ill at ease in his box because Suzette did not come. The Marquise, too, kept turning to her son and saying:

"Where is that child? I believe you have had a lover's quarrel, Henri!"

The theater was filled from floor to ceiling. It was the first time that Mimi la Joyeuse had come to Avignon, but her fame had come before her, and all the officers of the garrison, in their sky-blue uniforms, sat in the front stalls, with Colonel Bernadin in the center of them. The General himself, and his fat wife and ugly daughters, were in the box opposite that of the Marquise de Miraval, who bowed to them distantly. Up in the gallery the young lads of Avignon were already whistling some of the chansons which Mimi la Joyeuse had made famous in Paris and familiar to the orchestras of provincial towns.

Several poor "turns" preceded the number of the famous singer from Montmartre, and Henri de Miraval turned his head away from the stage and seemed to be in a day dream. The Marquise, who did not go to the theater more than once a year, was enjoying herself immensely and laughed at the feeblest jokes.

"Maman," said Henri, "I am alarmed about Mademoiselle Fraquet. I fear she may be ill. If she does not come in a little while, I shall go round to inquire."

"Foolish boy!" said the Marquise, tapping him on the hand. "That pretty child has bewitched you. Yet I am not sorry, because I always thought that your heart was too cold to be touched by love, Henri."

BEWARE of Dance Coughs



ONE
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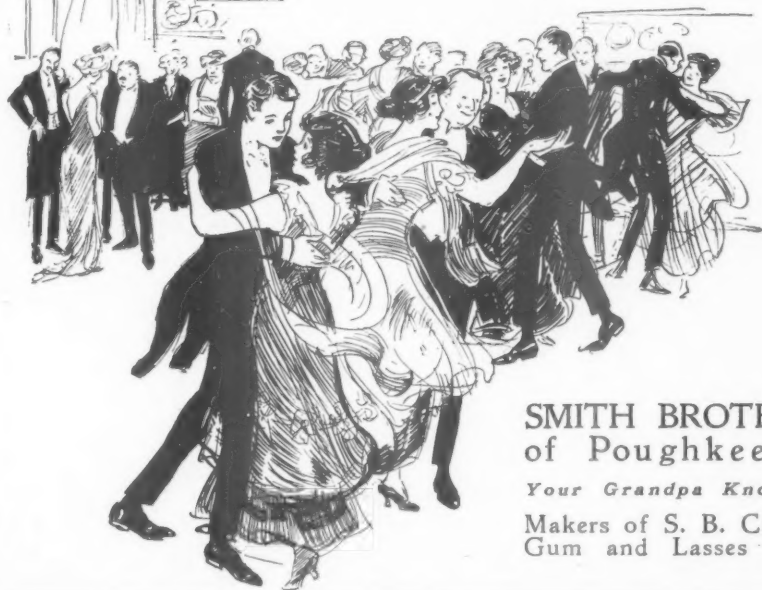
Enjoy the dance! But be sure and take a few S. B. Cough Drops on your way home. The medicinal oils from these drops will prevent throat tickle and check the effect of the night air.

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Never be without a box of S. B. Cough Drops during Fall and Winter—they're far better than medicine. Take one o' bedtime to loosen the phlegm. "A Stitch in Time—"



SMITH BROTHERS of Poughkeepsie

Your Grandpa Knows Us

Makers of S. B. Chewing
Gum and Lasses' Kisses

AS she spoke, there was a whispering throughout the house, like the stirring of leaves in a wood by a strong wind. Then there were volleys of clapping, as another number was flashed out above the orchestra. It was the turn of Mimi la Joyeuse, whom everyone had come to see.

The curtains parted, and behind the footlights stood the dainty figure with the smiling face, whose portrait—grotesquely unlike the original—had been placarded on the walls of Avignon. She was in the white silk frock of a dancing girl; her arms and shoulders were bare; and there was a circlet of gems about her wonderful hair. She smiled over the footlights and kissed her hands to the gallery, from which came a storm of approving shouts.

Henri de Miraval was leaning back in his chair. But suddenly he bent forward, gripped the edge of the box, and spoke hoarsely, so that his words could be heard by those in the stalls below him, "*Mon Dieu!*"

"What is it, Henri?" asked the Marquise. She was shortsighted, and put up her glasses to stare at the figure on the stage, who was speaking some droll words to the orchestra which set the house laughing and put them in a good humor with her at once. Then the Marquise turned her glasses, and gave a little cry.

"*Ciel!* Surely it cannot be! I can't believe it, Henri!"

"Hush!" said Henri. "Hush!"

The mother and son sat motionless. For half an hour they did not stir, while Mimi la Joyeuse sang her songs and danced about the stage. Her songs were full of audacity, the sullied wit of Paris, the keen, sharp satire of the boulevards, the rather tragic laughter of a city that knows the worst and the best of life, the pathos as well as the humor of the *comédie humaine*. Sometimes she stopped the orchestra with an imperious little gesture to chatter to the audience in a childish way, beneath the simplicity of which there lurked a roguish naughtiness. The young officers in the stalls laughed boisterously, clapping their white-gloved hands. Only Colonel Bernadin leaned forward, with his eye-

glass fixed, staring like a man amazed. Up in the gallery there was a riot of mirth.

Then she danced to them, and her tripping feet, her little scampers and childlike joyousness of rhythmic movement, put a spell upon the people, so that they held their breath, until, as she came to a halt, with her hands on her hips, they rose from their seats and shouted their applause. Then she came forward again, laughing, as though amused at their enthusiasm, and held up her hand for silence. The conductor of the orchestra tapped his bâton, and into the hush of the house there stole the silver melody of an old French song. It was the song of a troubadour to a Queen of France, and of the Queen's answers to her lover. It was one of those old songs which reach to the very fiber of the French heart, stirring its romance, its gallantry, its tenderness, its loyalty to the fatherland, its pity for lovers who break their hearts against the walls of Fate. It was the spirit of that poem by Gerault de Miraval which had been written in modern French by the young man who now sat with burning eyes and a dead-white face in the box of this theater. Mimi la Joyeuse sang it with such dramatic emotion, with such sweetness and sincerity and grace, that some of the young officers in the front row of stalls had tears in their eyes, and being Frenchmen were not ashamed.

And Henri, Vicomte de Miraval, who was white to his lips, held his breath so that he might not lose a cadence of that low, sweet voice. At the last verse she turned and looked straight into his box, as though it were his question that was being answered by the Queen Marguerite of France whose words were on her lips. It was the answer which a woman gives to the man she loves but to whom she cannot give her heart, because Fate is stronger than her love.

WHEN the curtain fell, Henri de Miraval drew a deep breath.

"My poor boy!" said the Marquise. "My poor dear Henri!"

There was a world of pity in her voice. But she added quickly, in a breathless way:



I owe my clear complexion to Resinol Soap

After years of experimenting with all sorts of things for my skin, I began to use Resinol Soap. In a few days I could see a marked improvement.

It seemed impossible that anything so simple as washing my face twice a day with hot water and a delightful toilet soap could do more good than all those tedious, expensive treatments; but the fact remains that now my complexion is clear, with the natural glow of health and youth that I feared it had lost for good.

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All druggists and dealers in toilet goods sell Resinol Soap. For trial cake, free, write to Dept. 29-D, Resinol, Baltimore, Md.



"When I asked you to be my wife I had no idea that you were a queen of France—one of her greatest artists."

"But she is wonderful! What genius!"

"*Mon Dieu!*" said her son. "*Mon Dieu!*"

He bowed over his mother's hand and kissed it, outside the theater, when she stepped into her carriage.

"I will walk a little," he said. "I need fresh air."

Suzette saw his white face, his haunting eyes, as she too drove from the theater, after she had changed from her dancing dress into the frock she wore as the sister of the Abbé Fraquet. The Vicomte de Miraval was standing a little in front of the crowd, which cheered her when she went away, as though she were a great lady of France. He did not see the tears which fell upon her hands when she sat alone in the cab on the short journey to her brother's house.

The Abbé Fraquet was on his knees before the crucifix in his parlor when

she opened the door and came in quietly. He rose from his *prie-dieu*, and stammered out a few words.

"I have been praying.... I have prayed God for your happiness, my dear."

She went up to him and put her hands on his shoulders, and cried a little. Then, strange child that she was, she gave a queer laugh.

"For one night only," she said. "Tomorrow I go back to Paris, *mon camarade*. There is no harm done."

"No, no!" said the Abbé eagerly. "Not back to Paris, Suzette! Stay here, in this place of peace. Perhaps tomorrow, after all, Henri will come and ask for you—"

She shook her head.

"Paris calls to me.... Besides, he will not ask me twice. You told me so, Armand, and though I pretended to be angry with you, I know it is true."

Faces glow with smiles
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are served. The sweet, creamy filling 'tween wafers of airy lightness blend in a harmony of delicate goodness. Nabisco are equally appropriate as a confection or as an accompaniment to any dessert. In ten-cent and twenty-five-cent tins.

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**NATIONAL BISCUIT
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BUT as she spoke Madame Vernet opened the door, and called out in her solemn old way:

"Monsieur le Vicomte de Miraval."

He was very pale when he came in with his black cloak turned back over his shoulder and his hat held tightly under his arm.

The Abbé Fraquet was pale too, conscience-stricken and panic-stricken. He was the first to speak.

"Henri, my dear comrade, I hope you will forgive.... We ought to have told you.... It was my fault. I was afraid."

"Afraid?" said Henri. "Afraid of what? It is I who am afraid."

He went forward to Suzette and took her hand and raised it to his lips.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "I owe you a thousand pardons. When I asked you to be my wife, I had no idea that you were a queen of France—one of her greatest artists.... And when I spoke slanders against the name of Mimi la Joyeuse, I did not know her genius nor her real identity.... Forgive me. As a beggarly fellow I had no right to offer you my poor love."

Suzette's hands fluttered up to her bosom.

"You asked me a question to-day," she said, with a queer thrill in her voice. "Do you ask it again—now that you know the truth?"

"If you gave me leave, if I had the courage, I would ask it again," said the Vicomte, eagerly.

Suzette laughed, and there was a great joy in her laughter.

"I give you leave—if you have the courage!"

"Then I ask again," said the Vicomte. "Suzette!"

The Abbé Fraquet clasped Suzette by the arm. There was a shining light in his eyes, and yet his voice trembled.

"But my dears—Madame la Marquise? Henri! What will your mother say?"

"She lives only for my happiness," said Henri de Miraval. "She will not refuse to make me happy."

"Then—" said the Abbé. He turned and looked at Suzette, with all his soul melted into tenderness.

"Then," said Suzette, with the smile which had won the heart of Paris, "then—there is nothing more to be said! Let us take a little supper, *mes amis*."

The Home of His Dreams

LOVE and architecture are the two prominent factors in this charming story.

By E. M. Jameson

Author of "A House Divided," etc.

Messrs. HARRIS & LICHFIELD,
Architects.

Dear Sirs:

Out of the forty designs sent in in answer to my advertisement, yours approaches most closely my ideas of the country house I want.

Before finally deciding, however, I wonder if one of the firm would come in to-morrow evening at eight o'clock for a smoke and a chat over plans? I would call upon you at your office, but unfortunately I am literally tied by the leg, having wrenched my ankle rather

badly. Under the circumstances perhaps you will waive ceremony and come to see me. I am eager to make a start.

Very faithfully yours,

HUGH G. WETHERBY.

THE letter was duly delivered next morning at a certain dingy little office in a huge block, an office consisting of one small room, meagerly furnished. Architectural plans were pinned to the walls, and there was a certain amount

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THE Hatch ONE-Button UNION SUIT

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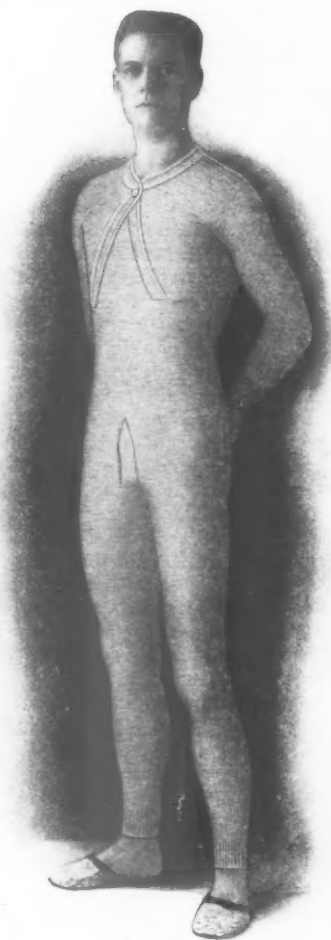
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Our illustrated booklet describing the
complete line of winter and summer
weights of Hatch One-Button Union
Suits will be sent free.

of litter, all rather laboriously arranged, as if to make business appear brisker than it was.

The furniture comprised two small tables, two hard, uncomfortable chairs, a cupboard and a stove. The typewriter, which stood upon the smaller table, conveyed the impression of having seen better days.

Before the second table, a blue "Art" rug was spread; while over the mantelshelf hung an oval mirror surmounted by loops of true lovers' knots, out of which appeared a Cupid, arrow against the bow, ready to shoot his dart. The chubby, round-faced, smiling little god of Love bestowed upon the commonplace surroundings an air of simpering romance. But there was yet another hint of sentiment in the shape of a posy of spring flowers in a blue-and-white ginger jar, placed like a votive offering before the shrine of Cupid.

The door opened and Miss Brown, secretary to the firm and thrillingly new to business life, arrived on the instant. She picked up the morning's mail, and laid the letters on the junior partner's table. Then she kindled the stove. That accomplished, she removed her coat and hat and proceeded to arrange her hair before the mirror, sniffing at the spring posy meanwhile.

Miss Brown was sufficiently juvenile to wear her hair tied at the nape of her neck in a big ribbon bow. As she stood there, tweaking it more becomingly into place on either side of her round cheeks, she possessed an odd likeness to the little Cupid swinging above in the gilded true lovers' knot. For it was the boy clerk of Messrs. Crowley & Rogers opposite who kept the ginger jar replenished, and all for love of Myra Brown, who treated him as the dust beneath her tread. But he was one of those lovers whose infatuation seems to flourish upon disdain.

MISS BROWN withdrew a sprig of wallflower and placed it in her belt; then, smiling at her reflection in the mirror, and humming a tune, she went over to sort out the morning's mail.

There were circulars, as usual, by the dozen. Miss Brown inspected them, one by one, and spread them out in a row.

But to-day there was a letter in their midst, not typed, but addressed in clear, compact handwriting to Messrs. Harris & Lichfield. In all the two months, no letter had ever come for the firm, merely circulars. Miss Brown placed it uppermost and allowed herself to hope that it might be an order received in time to keep the highly respected firm from annihilation. Wishing she had eyes of X-ray capacity, she frowned back at the large, square envelope as she sat down at the typewriter.

It was her own idea that she should, by way of advertisement, tap it loudly to produce an effect of extreme business pressure. Many departures from the path of strict veracity must be laid to Miss Brown's charge. Harris & Lichfield little guessed how enviable a reputation for affairs they had gained in the building, thanks to Miss Brown's energetic personality and the hints she let fall in the elevator.

She was still tapping to imaginary correspondents when Miss Ruth Lichfield, junior partner, entered the room. Miss Brown, adoring satellite, sprang up to relieve her of her umbrella. Ruth smiled down at her, and slowly removed her gloves. She was a slim girl of medium height, with brown eyes of the softness of pansies. Her face was small and oval, with a complexion of clear fairness where the color ebbed and flowed readily under any kind of emotion. Her walk to save carfare had brought a vivid rose to her cheeks, and deepened her eyes to distracting depth and beauty.

In the lapel of her well-cut gray costume was fixed a bunch of violets. Everything concerning her was of the trimmest, and she evinced good breeding in every line. Miss Brown considered her the loveliest person of her acquaintance, but then Miss Brown, perhaps, was prejudiced.

"Morning, Myra. Any mail?"

"Heaps of circulars, Miss Lichfield, as usual, and one letter."

Miss Lichfield did not allow herself to be soul-shaken by this intelligence. She, too, removed her hat and touched the bright bronze hair at her temples, and she, too, inhaled the breath of the

How Much Of Your Dyspepsia Is Nervousness?

That question could just as well be turned completely around; how much of your nervousness is dyspepsia?

It's a peculiar thing that either one can produce the other. Or, put



it still another way—remove the causes of one and you will remove the other—totally. The nervous person is nearly al-

ways a dyspeptic. The dyspeptic is, invariably, nervous.

A Combined Tonic and Sedative is Required

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Pabst Extract, The "Best" Tonic, which combines the nourishing and digestive properties of malt



with the tonic and sedative values of hops in a concentrated liquid food—rich in nerve and blood building

properties and so easy of assimilation that the maximum benefit is imparted with no digestive effort whatever.

A Conscientious Course Will Work Wonders

Pabst Extract contains no magic.

One bottle of it will not effect a cure—but taken conscientiously during a limited period it will help



each function of the body to perform its proper and normal duty.

Each organ will be "toned" and "tuned"—real life will go coursing and tingling through the veins—a veritable crimson tide of efficiency and effectiveness. And all this will be the result of stimulating the digestive fluids to renewed activity.

Your Druggist Will Supply You With a Dozen

Let us suggest that you order a trial dozen bottles from your druggist. He will tell you how physicians endorse its use—but, insist upon Pabst Extract, The "Best" Tonic.

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spring flowers. Then she walked to the window and looked out at the roof-tops.

"Oh, Myra, how lovely the country must be just now; think of the hedges budding green, and the flowers shaking out—"

"For myself, I prefer the town," remarked Miss Brown primly, "—but then, we're not all made alike."

Miss Lichfield gave an odd little smile and approached the table. She knew very well that Miss Brown, young and earnest, was calling her to order for inattention to business.

She turned over the circulars; then she took up the letter and inspected with exasperating slowness its superscription and stamp. Truth to tell, the firm's hopes were about dead. The junior partner guessed that a perusal would mean only another disappointment. They disguised advertisements so cunningly nowadays.

SHE opened the envelope and read the contents. Immediately the onlooker was rewarded. Miss Lichfield dropped into a chair, turning a delighted and amazed glance upon her underling.

"Myra!"

A tide of emotion swept over the speaker's face, and one realized how young she was.

"He positively likes mine best."

"Your what, Miss Lichfield?" Then the truth burst upon Miss Brown.

"Not your plans for the country house—the Hugh G. Wetherby house?"

"Yes."

"I knew it couldn't be improved on—the cunning little place. You remember I told you—"

Miss Lichfield laughed.

"But of course I didn't believe you; it was far too good to be true. Out of forty, Myra!"

"All the same if it had been a hundred and forty," maintained Miss Brown. "This firm's going to hum, I tell you, once it gets a start. Mark my words."

Ruth read the note again. "He asks me to smoke with him," she said with a subdued laugh, "and I don't smoke, Myra."

"That may prove to be a disadvantage," said Miss Brown, "but your not

smoking isn't going to put him off a design he likes."

"It may be a shock to him to find I'm a woman. Perhaps I'd better mention the fact when I reply."

"I don't see myself what Sex has got to do with Architecture," said Miss Brown, speaking in capital letters. "I wouldn't tell him if I were you. Take him by surprise. If you'll dictate a letter, I'll type it."

So a letter was sent from Harris & Lichfield accepting the appointment for eight o'clock that evening—a letter which totally ignored the problem of Sex.

"Have a real good meal before you go," advised Miss Brown later in the day, "—none of your sandwiches and coffee. It's simply wonderful the nerve a good dinner gives."

Ruth laughed.

"Myra, how elderly you are!"

Miss Brown's pert bow seemed to take a firmer set.

"I mean to make good before I'm many years older; and a poor opinion of oneself never got anybody on in this world. Look at you, now, Miss Lichfield, one of the cleverest, and you don't blow your own trumpet a bit."

"I can do the plans and drawing easily enough," replied the junior partner, her brown eyes dreamily on the jar with its spring posy, "but I should like some one else to blow my trumpet for me. You, Myra, for instance. If you would only put up your hair, I'd send you to interview Hugh G. Wetherby for the firm."

"It wouldn't do at all," said Miss Brown, taking her employer seriously. And to her typewriting machine she confidentially tapped the words:

I'm banking on more than your cleverness.

For Miss Brown, though caustic with the Crowley & Rogers boy, had romantic ideals where Ruth Lichfield was concerned.

HUGH G. WETHERBY had come into a fortune not so long ago. He was by no means a millionaire. But all the same he had inherited a legacy sufficiently large for the newspapers to



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publish his portrait and the somewhat unusual circumstances under which he had succeeded to the money. Miss Brown had a vague remembrance of a pleasant, clean-shaven face and broad shoulders. She wished now she had kept the clipping. But who in the world was to guess that out of dozens sent in for consideration, the designs of Harris & Lichfield, a young and unknown firm, would stand to win?

"I shall hardly sleep to-night for thinking of you," Miss Brown told Miss Lichfield on departing that evening, "though there's little doubt we shall get the job."

Ruth leaned forward and kissed the round, determined face.

"Don't be too sure, Myra. I wish you were going to the interview instead of myself."

"It wouldn't do at all," said Miss Brown, taking the remark in all good faith. "Don't forget to have a real substantial meal first. Promise."

"I promise."

And contrary to all her desires, the junior partner kept faith and benefited thereby.

THE car dropped her within five minutes' walk of H. G. Wetherby's address. He lived in a big house let out in apartments, and he had the first floor.

Ruth walked slowly along the quiet thoroughfare. Not a stone's-throw away she had left the noisy cars behind her. Here it was all quiet, with a star-strewn sky overhead and a thrill of spring in the air. Even in town, she thought, it was possible to distinguish the divine unrest that was going on in the country a few miles out. Ruth was a lover of the country, and some time, when she had made a success of life, she meant to have a cottage at a distance from the city, and come in to her office every day. The mere thought of having it to go back to of an evening would sweeten the toil and the bricks and mortar of the town.

Arrived at her destination, she presented her card. Orders had been given that anyone from the firm of Harris & Lichfield was to be shown up at once.

The woman took in the card, then stood aside for Ruth to enter.

Seated at the fire, his injured ankle propped on another chair, and a round table beside him scattered over with papers, was a man of about thirty. Ruth got an instant impression of an eager, plain, almost boyish, face, clean-shaven, with alert blue-gray eyes fixed upon her. He made a gesture to rise, but Ruth came forward quickly.

"Please don't. You will only injure your ankle."

He desisted, but sat very erect, looking at her, she thought, with a hint of disappointment. Her heart sank. Better to have prepared him for her sex. It was bound to make a difference.

"I expect there has been some mistake," he said in his pleasant voice. "I am expecting some one from Harris & Lichfield, the architects."

"I sent in my card," said Ruth, a little uncertainly. "Please look at it."

He did so, reading slowly:

MESSRS. HARRIS & LICHFIELD,
Architects.

Miss Ruth Lichfield.

From the card he looked at her. She stood near the table, where her own plans lay. He stared at her, then made another effort to rise.

"Please stay where you are," Ruth said quickly. "And does it make any difference?" She found herself quoting Miss Brown. "Why need there be Sex in Architecture any more than in other Art?"

Wetherby smiled, still rather taken aback.

"Well, after all, why should there be? Do sit down, anyway, and we'll talk things over. Quite natural for me to be surprised when I expected a great big burly man."

Ruth smiled and sat down in the chair placed ready at the table.

Wetherby felt more at ease once he had her seated. There was a decanter of whisky on the table and a siphon, also a silver box containing cigars and cigarettes. He himself was smoking a well-browned pipe. With a smile, he indicated the cigarettes.

"Do you smoke, Miss Lichfield?"

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THE HOME OF HIS DREAMS

"Not at all." Ruth spoke almost apologetically. Then her lips curved in a smile. "I expect it will be another shock to find I don't follow the fashion."

Wetherby smiled too.

"I don't care to see your sex smoking, so it is a shock on the agreeable side. Do you mind if I go on smoking?"

"Please do."

BETWEEN them lay the plans for the country house and Ruth's delicately tinted water-color of the completed scheme—a long, low house covering a good space of ground, with gables and a russet-tinted roof that later would take on lovely hues of brown, dim purple, orange and yellow. Wetherby held it up and surveyed it.

"If it is not breaking into the firm's secrets, I should like to know whether this is your work or that of James B. Harris?"

The color rose to Ruth's face. But her eyes were very frank. "It is entirely my work, though it goes out in the name of both. Mr. Harris is not very active in the firm—'a sleeping partner.'"

Wetherby hardly heard. He noted the blush and wondered why it came. It made her look very charming and girlish. His pipe was not drawing well. He knocked out the ashes and put it aside. Then he folded his arms and looked across at her. "I should like to know how you, a mere ch—" (he paused before the word "child" had escaped his lips) "girl, came to guess so exactly what I wanted for a country house. You gathered from my advertisement, of course, the number of rooms and so forth, but you literally are the only competitor who entirely satisfied me. All those others sent me plans for a mansion. The number of rooms was to advertisement, but the size of them and the space the house covered— Good heavens! they take me for a millionaire, most of them, I suppose, because news of that legacy got into the papers; and they planned the house accordingly."

He stopped and looked across at her. But as she in no way helped him out, he proceeded:

"Did you hear about the money left to me?"

Ruth inclined her head. The bronze of her hair against the gray edge of her toque, and the smudge of violet in her coat lapel, pleased his color sense. Moreover, there was the pink of apple blossom in her cheeks.

"She's Spring incarnate," Wetherby told himself. Then aloud: "And it did not make you suppose that I wanted to lay out most of it on a house?"

Ruth laughed. She owned that somewhat rare thing—a gay and pretty laugh. "No, of course not. I forget how much the legacy was, but at all events—"

She broke off, her eyes very soft and introspective. "Shall I tell you why I sent in just that type of house?"

He leaned forward too, on his side of the table, keenly interested. "Yes, tell me."

"You know, I risked a good deal by sending in that particular house."

How extraordinarily long her lashes were!

"Why?"

"Most of the men I know who have succeeded in business or profession have wanted a great deal of show for their money. Haven't you noticed in the architectural papers: 'House built for So-and-So—House built for So-and-So?' All massive, highly ornamented, with horrible marble halls and rooms calculated to give one the shivers—so lofty, so bare, so polished!"

Wetherby nodded. "I know; a friend of mine has just gone into one. His wife likes it, and she gives big entertainments. But the other day he told me he longed for his old den, ten by twelve, with its shabby carpet and well-worn chairs. He felt a stranger in his own house."

Miss Lichfield nodded. "One gets an affection for one's household gods."

"I have never possessed any of my own," said Wetherby, suddenly grave. "Ever since I was thrown on my own resources as a boy of fifteen, I resolved one day to have a real home. I mapped it all out in the rough, room by room, almost brick by brick." He paused, a whimsical apology in his eyes. "Am I boring you to death?"

"No."

The monosyllable and shake of the head encouraged him.



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"I had a pretty bad time for years," he went on; "and then, by sheer, hard grind, I began to put by a little for the house. In the midst of poverty, hunger and disillusionment—sometimes I went hungry to bed—I never lost grip of that home I'd promised myself. It helped me along. Sometimes the little bank balance was down to zero, and my spirits followed. But I always brought myself out of the slough by a look at the rough plans I'd drawn. Sure you're not tired of hearing about it?"

"Every word interests me."

"Maybe it's good for a man to have even a red-tiled roof tree for an objective," went on Wetherby. "Anyhow, it kept me straight. I saved until I had enough to buy the plot of land I'd set my mind on. I was deadly afraid some other chap better off would step in before I'd collected the shekels. That accomplished, I began to save for the house, only seeing it in a fairly long vista of years. Then, old George Bannersley died and left me his pile. He lived in poverty, and nobody dreamed he was anything but poor, so poor that now and then I'd take him in a cigar and the evening paper, and read the news to him in his dingy top-floor room—imagining he couldn't afford either smokes or papers."

"Go on, please," urged Ruth, as he paused.

"The old man knew of the home of my dreams, and whenever he lighted up he would wave the cigar after the first draw and say: 'So much the more delay, my boy. The money for this ought to have gone to the Fund.' I can see him now, unshaven, rough, with a shrewd eye and smile. I never imagined he had even enough to live on."

"You still mean to work?" asked Ruth. She liked this frank-faced man who related his annals with so much surprise at his own good luck.

"Of course, I should be miserable hanging around—and since the money reached me, business has been booming—and I love work."

"It's generally the way," said Ruth. "I wonder—"

"Yes?"

"Nothing."

A vision of Miss Brown rose to mind, reproving her for letting professional secrets out of the bag.

"You haven't told me why you sent in that particular type of house," said Wetherby.

"I should think you might guess." Her beautiful eyes, frank as a boy's, met his. "It was solely because, when I succeed in my profession, I mean to have just such a house as that myself. Yours almost grew under my pencil of its own accord. It insisted on steering off the house I supposed *you* wanted, to the house I wanted myself. Something seemed to take possession of me. I designed it really for myself, but I thought it might as well go in for competition."

"And Harris hadn't a hand in it?"

She colored again vividly.

"Never hears the chap's name without blushing," thought Wetherby, and for some reason he was incensed with Harris.

"No."

"We may as well fix it up right away," said Wetherby. "The award is yours, Miss Lichfield,—I hope Harris won't claim the lion's share,—a hundred pounds prize money, and the usual terms."

"I am glad," was all Ruth said. But her voice wavered a degree. Not even Miss Brown knew to what a low ebb the firm's resources had fallen. Wetherby held up the sketch.

"Are you too busy to start in at once?"

Miss Brown undoubtedly would have pursed her lips and considered a moment, but Miss Lichfield lacked business aplomb. She nodded without a moment's hesitation.

"As soon as you like."

"The garden's laid out in part already," said Wetherby. "Those daffodils and the bunch of wallflowers came from the estate." He pushed the big bowl nearer, that Miss Lichfield might inhale the perfume of the brown velvety flowers.

Suddenly it struck him that they matched her eyes and her hair.

"I'll give you a bunch when we go down to see the place."

"When will that be?" asked Miss Lichfield. "Your ankle—?"



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"It's a most confounded nuisance that just when delay is over, I am tied by the leg. But I'm not going to grouch. Here I am with plenty of shekels, able to build without borrowing on mortgage—a thing I've always fought shy of—realizing my dream at thirty. I'm the luckiest man alive!"

Ruth began to gather her belongings, preparatory to departure. He leaned nearer, alert again.

"Can't you stay a little longer? I've been here all day alone, longing to talk over my plans. I'm a frightfully lonely chap with lots of friends, but no relations, not even cousins that I know of. My only sister died last year." He steered off the subject as if, even now, it was impossible to touch further upon his loss. Then he brought his glance to her. "I expect you've heaps of relations—and a home—hosts of good friends—and all that."

She shook her head. "I have two married brothers abroad whose wives I have never even seen, and an aunt in the country—a day's journey away. I live in a boarding-house where I have a bed sitting-room. I detest that mode of living, but my profession fills my life—every detail absorbs me. The office is really my home." Her beautiful eyes grew deep and soft.

"And you're making good?" He did not guess that it was solely on the strength of gaining his work that she nodded an affirmative.

"I am making good. And this is going to get me more commissions, I expect. The Hugh G. Wetherby house has gained some publicity. Again, thank you for giving my designs the preference."

SHE arose, and he made a big effort to stand too.

"If you do this kind of thing, it will take you longer to get your ankle well," she told him reprovingly. "After all, forget that I'm a woman."

Wetherby smiled.

"It's not easy. You're so—so—" he hesitated.

"Yes?"

"So intensely feminine, if you don't mind my saying so. I should have expected a woman architect to appear with

short hair, a Trilby hat and a collar and tie."

Ruth laughed.

"I should hate it. There are a few women architects. I wonder there are not many more—but as I've never met them, I am quite in the dark as to their mode of dress."

She returned to business as they shook hands.

"Let me know when to expect you for an interview."

"Soon," said Wetherby as she reached the door. "I'll take a taxi along to you—I'm keen to begin. Tell me,"—she turned at the words,—“can I deal entirely with you in the matter—not with Harris? You, I take it, are the junior partner?" He noticed that again the color flooded her face.

"I am the junior partner," said Ruth, the door-handle between her fingers, "but if you prefer it, you need not have any dealings with Mr. Harris. I will arrange matters with him."

She nodded. The door opened and closed again. The room seemed suddenly empty. In the midst of his satisfaction, Wetherby could not help feeling a twinge of discontent.

"She blushes divinely every time that fellow's name is mentioned. Perhaps they are on the way to a partnership for life. Somehow,"—he took up the water-color drawing and surveyed it,—“I'm mighty glad Harris had no hand in this, that it's all the work, inside and out, of Lichfield."

TIME passed. Early spring merged into late summer, and the house neared completion. Every day since the foundations were laid, Wetherby had run down in his car for an hour or two to follow its progress, and incidentally, it must be owned, to see the junior partner. She was to Wetherby a never-ceasing wonder. Nothing escaped the glance of her brown eyes. She and the builder and his men were all determined to give their best. The mere fact of getting so often into the country scenes she loved, brought happiness to Ruth's heart. At all events, she never remembered a season so full of all that made life worth living.



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Other commissions had come to the firm as the result of Wetherby's work—not many, but sufficient to enable Ruth to lay the foundations of a fund towards her own country cottage of the future.

Sometimes she discussed it with Wetherby, but not often; it was a subject on which he showed a lack of sympathy that in some vague way hurt her feelings. They were friends now, with a number of tastes in common, but as far as possible, Ruth tried to keep to business, both at her office and down at the house. She refused to be taken out to restaurants and theaters. Miss Brown frankly considered her a fool.

"He'd take a man out to dinner," she said, "and why not you, Miss Lichfield? You keep too hard at work, and Mr. Wetherby is very disappointed."

"I cannot help that," said Miss Lichfield hard-heartedly. "And dinners and theaters are not essential to business."

"He's given us our chance, anyway," said Miss Brown, who always associated herself closely with the firm; "and just see how different everything is. No more imaginary tapping for me on the machine. It's all sober earnest now. But comparing former times, we can't complain if we are overworked now and then."

Miss Lichfield walked across to the ginger jar, now filled with roses, and sniffed daintily. The mirror reflected a vision in pink gingham, with a shady hat from under whose brim looked two brown eyes of pansy softness. Miss Brown watched her. The junior partner selected a rose, turning to ask a question first.

"Do you think Crowley & Roger's boy would mind if I helped myself to one of your roses, Myra?"

"I'd like to find him daring to object," replied Miss Brown. "I'd soon squelch him."

Ruth tucked a rose into her belt and took up her parasol. It was summer even in the dingy office, and the sun lay warm and mellow on the roof-tops. Miss Lichfield paused, looking with some compunction at the erect figure of her underling.

"Myra, I wish you could go sometimes instead of me."

"I'm wanted here," interposed Miss Brown. "Now business is beginning to hum, surprising how much in request we are."

"When the house is completed and the furniture in, Mr. Wetherby talks of giving the firm a house-warming luncheon, Myra. You are to come."

"I shall be very pleased," said Miss Brown primly.

"He has asked me to help him buy the furniture, Myra."

She looked at Miss Brown, but that surprising young person never flicked an eyelash. She merely arranged a new sheet in her machine.

"Very sensible of Mr. Wetherby. For such an energetic, go-ahead man, he seems rather helpless and dependent in some ways. Haven't you noticed it?"

"Not particularly."

"I'm a student of human nature, myself," said Miss Brown, "and I find most people surprisingly contradictory. Now you, for instance, Miss Lichfield—"

The latter colored, and went hastily towards the door.

"Don't study me, Myra, please. I know I am contradictory, and I wish I were not; it's very disturbing. If Mr. Wetherby should call, tell him I find myself obliged to go earlier than usual to the house. I am too busy to stay long."

The door opened and was closing again, when Miss Brown spoke.

"Does Mr. Wetherby often take people down to see the house?"

"Only twice to my knowledge."

"Was it,"—Miss Brown's large bow needed rearranging,—"was it that lady I sometimes see him with?"

"What lady?"

"I don't know who she is, but she's very handsome, tall and fair, always beautifully dressed. I wondered if it was his sister."

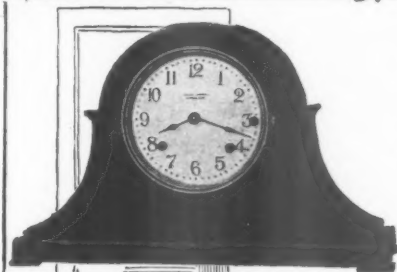
"He hasn't a sister."

"A cousin, perhaps," said Miss Brown thoughtfully, beginning to space for a letter.

"He hasn't, to his own knowledge, even a cousin."

THE door closed very quietly. Miss Brown smiled and leaned her chin on her palm, looking at the roses in the

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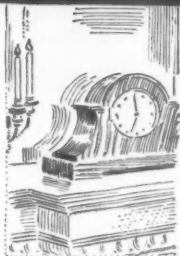
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blue ginger jar. Then she settled down to the morning's correspondence, tapping from her shorthand-notes with a good heart, if not with a conscience crystal clear.

"Neither of them can see an inch before their faces," she assured herself, and was just beginning on a fourth letter when there came a knock at the door. It was not the knock of Crowley & Roger's boy.

"Come in."

Hugh Wetherby appeared—tall, plain, and yet with something about him that rendered him almost handsome. His face changed when he saw that Miss Brown was alone.

"Miss Lichfield left word that she was obliged to go down to the house earlier to-day," said Miss Brown, "and she would not be able to stay long."

"Busy?" asked Mr. Wetherby.

"Extremely busy," replied Miss Brown.

Wetherby took a rapid turn up and down the room. Miss Brown folded her hands in her lap, wondering why he did not career off in his automobile and overtake Miss Lichfield before she returned to town.

"What's that confounded Harris doing that he leaves her all the work?"

"I'm afraid he's a bit of a slacker," agreed Miss Brown. "He's nearly always abroad, but Miss Lichfield won't have a word said against him."

Wetherby's jaw took a firmer set. "I know that. She dropped on me one day when I presumed to question his ability and working powers."

"She would, you know. I've quite given up expecting better things from Mr. Harris, myself."

"Does he come to the office often? Wait, though; I've no business to question you on what goes on here."

"Perhaps not,"—Miss Brown's voice was firm,—*"but I may just tell you that he never comes to the office."*

"The cur!—to leave her all the work to do. She's looking thinner, don't you think so, Miss Brown?"

Miss Brown wrinkled her brows. "Perhaps. She really is working very hard—and eating very little."

"She gives me no opportunity to judge

of her appetite," said Wetherby bitterly. "She simply sticks to business and won't accept any entertainment from me. It's quite a usual thing, now isn't it, Miss Brown, to take your architect out to lunch or to dinner?"

"Of course. But Miss Lichfield is very proud—and she says that being a woman makes a difference."

Her listener uttered a hasty word under his breath.

"It's carrying pride to an absurd pitch—but I've no business to discuss Miss Lichfield. Thank you all the same, Miss Brown. I suppose you never lose your head?"

"It would not do at all in business."

"But in your play-time?"

"Very, *very* seldom."

"Lucky for you!" exclaimed Wetherby with a rueful smile. "Are you too level-headed to enjoy chocolates, Miss Brown?"

"I adore chocolates."

"Then you shall have the biggest, most be-ribboned box the town contains. You're such a standby for Miss Lichfield. She says she doesn't know what she'd do without you."

Across Miss Brown's round face a trace of emotion played.

"I love her. She has been very kind to me. She's just as good really as she is to look at. She deserves to get on—though, of course, we all know it isn't the deserving that prosper."

Wetherby, laughing, opened the door.

"Cunning young philosopher, to know that! You must come and see the house when it's finished and furnished and turned into a home."

"Furniture doesn't make a home," said Miss Brown.

And as he entered the elevator, Wetherby found himself agreeing with her.

THAT afternoon a messenger-boy delivered at Messrs. Harris & Lichfield's a parcel addressed to Miss Myra Brown. It contained the largest, handsomest, most be-ribboned box of chocolates to be found in the city. Miss Brown had never dreamed of possessing such. Its magnificence and size disturbed for a moment her wonted calm. She

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looked across it to the Cupid swinging in his knot of true love and nodded to herself with a sage smile.

"He must be very, very much in love," she remarked; "and, of course, it's easy to see he is. Women disguise their feelings better. You'd think sometimes she actually disliked him. But then—one knows"—her glance went to the flowery ginger jar—"by one's own experience."

THE house stood ready from ground floor to roof tree, furnished through-out, curtains in the windows. Buying the furniture seemed to bring Wetherby and Miss Lichfield closer together. Given the excellent taste possessed by both, and a bank balance of goodly proportions such as Wetherby owned, furnishing became a keen delight. The junior partner relaxed over the furniture choosing; they spent days and weeks over it, diving into all manner of curio shops to gain just the desirable antique requisite for the house. There was a subtle delight in those days that got into heart and brain. Rain or shine, cloudy or clear, the atmosphere was rose-colored all the way. They even lunched together now and then.

A dozen times he was on the point of putting his fate to the touch, when she eluded him. Away from her, he doubted. It seemed all too impossibly good to be true. Every joist, every brick of the home she had planned for him could have told of a hope or a fear. "I'll ask her the day of the house-warming," he told himself. And now that it was so near, time seemed to creep on weighted wings, slowly, heavily, with a kind of mingled apprehension and delight.

As the first entertainment was to consist, by Wetherby's desire, solely of the firm, and as no servants had yet been engaged, Ruth and Miss Brown requested that they might be left to see to the feast. Wetherby reluctantly agreed.

"We should like you to understand that we do not restrict ourselves to architectural work alone," said the junior partner gayly. "Miss Brown is a most competent person. Later, you will entertain your fine friends in the house, and we will read reports in the papers."

"There's going to be a good deal of entertaining in our—my house," said Wetherby.

Ruth thought of the tall, handsome, fair girl mentioned more than once by Miss Brown. She had a swift mind-picture of her welcoming Wetherby back of an evening. The sun was darkened.

"There's one thing," said Wetherby with decision: "even at the risk of seeming inhospitable, I will not have James B. Harris inside my doors."

Again the color flooded her face. For Wetherby, too, the sun was darkened. She did not blush for him—Wetherby—who loved her heart and soul. He felt convinced that if she refused him, Harris would be to blame.

THE house was complete almost to the last essential. On Saturday the office of Harris & Lichfield remained closed. There was no business doing, for the reason that the junior partner and Miss Brown were away busy preparing the house-warming luncheon. Wetherby, for this one morning, found himself turned out of his newly acquired property.

"Luncheon will be served at one-thirty," said Miss Lichfield, hard-heartedly. "After that you may have the run of your own house for always. Until one-thirty, Myra and I reign supreme. We promise it shall be quite a simple luncheon."

"I'll bring a bottle of champagne from town," said Wetherby, just inside the office door.

"As you please; but Myra is too young, and I do not care for champagne. Still," relenting at his disappointment, "we'll sip the health of the Hugh G. Wetherby house and wish it good luck. I owe it a great deal—I have enough now to buy a plot of ground for my cottage, and I am only hesitating over the locality."

Wetherby's eyes met and held hers for a heart-beat or two.

"Don't decide finally without letting me know," he said, appeal in his glance.

"But you were in such a hurry about your house."

"That was different. Promise."

"I promise," said Ruth. But she did

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so with a hesitation that Miss Brown would have applauded.

ON Saturday at one-twenty-five precisely, Wetherby drove his car through his own gate and along the drive to his own open front door. The house lay bathed in sunshine. Wetherby was not what is called a religious man; yet as he stepped across the threshold of the house he hoped might be his home and the junior partner's to the end of their days, he uttered a wish, half prayer, half longing, that for all its inarticulateness, went deep.

There was a movement from a doorway. He turned expectantly, but it was only Miss Brown in a new frock and hair ribbon, sent by Miss Lichfield to summon him to luncheon.

Miss Lichfield, in the dining-room, stood near the window. The sunshine lay bright on her hair; she was pale, and shadows lay under the velvet softness of her eyes. Wetherby's glance left her to run over the table in its bravery of silver and crystal. His board—his very own—was spread at last! Then he noted that places were laid for his guests to right and left of him. The place opposite, dedicated to the mistress of the household, was bare.

"The table looks delightful," he said after an instant's pause, "but if you do not mind, I'd prefer to make a change."

He moved the silver and cutlery and glasses to the position facing his own. Then, with a grave bow, he took Miss Lichfield's hand and led her up to it.

"I'd like better to see you there, if you have no objection. Now, Miss Myra—"

He hoped that Ruth might accord to him one of the blushes she bestowed so freely upon James B. Harris, but instead she grew pale. Some emotions, and those the most soul-shaking, have that effect. But her unsmiling pallor sent Wetherby's hopes to zero. It took a Miss Brown to understand. The luncheon was not an entire success, though Miss Brown did her best to save the situation. They drank the health of the new house, of the owner, and of the firm—expunging, by request of their host, the name of the senior partner, James B. Harris. After

partaking of coffee on the veranda, Miss Brown announced that she was going to "clear away." Ruth sprang up, but her host intervened.

"Perhaps you can manage alone for a while, Myra. I want to have a business talk with Miss Lichfield before I finally take possession of the house she has planned so well for me. This is a good opportunity."

"Couldn't possibly be better," acknowledged Miss Brown, deliberately throwing her employer to the lions.

"On Monday at the office," suggested Ruth hastily. "This is a social gathering."

But Miss Brown had already disappeared, and Wetherby stood waiting with an air of such unusual resolution that she demurred no further. There was a grim determination about him that made her heart beat. She moved towards the chair she had vacated a moment earlier. Wetherby put out his hand and took hers, holding it in a clasp so firm that it would have been futile to struggle. He drew her, still silent, in through the long windows. It was the room of all others she wished to avoid. It had cost her such heartache to see all the dainty things accumulated for that particular room. He had chosen them nearly all himself. It was a charming room, from the Sheraton bureau to the old color-prints on the walls. Most things that a woman would desire in her own special sitting-room were gathered there. It had lacerated Ruth's heart to see the tender care with which the master of the house had chosen them. Not once, but several times, had the malicious Miss Brown dilated upon that purely imaginary tall, fair girl, until Ruth had almost seen her visibly about the house, and in this room most of all.

But there was some element about Wetherby to-day that sent her pulses racing. As they stood near the hearth, his hold of her hand grew closer. The silence seemed to take on some new wonderful meaning. After a moment, Wetherby went straight to the point.

"Ruth,"—he called her by name for the first time,—*"this is the home of my dreams—at least it will be, if you promise to share it with me."*

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"No, no," interrupted Ruth.

He did not even seem to hear her.

"Otherwise, I shall sell it right out, beautiful as it is—and sacred, because of you. I shall get rid of it right away."

Outside the window a bird piped his clear note; in the kitchen, consumed by anxiety, Miss Brown sang almost as sweetly. Ruth glanced up at him for the first time; and at the look in his eyes, she lost her businesslike air and her head at the same time.

"It would be a great pity to sell, after all the time and money spent upon it." Her face was more eloquent than her words.

Wetherby with a quick exclamation caught her in his arms. She was held closely, closely to his heart, all doubts melting away in the exquisite relief, like dew before the sun. He kissed her, heart beating against heart. It was glorious to be young, to find the home of his dreams, and the woman.

"This is *your* room, of course," he said presently. "Didn't you guess I meant it for you?"

"How could I guess?" asked Ruth. "I thought there must be somebody—some other woman."

"There never has been any woman but you," said Wetherby. "I knew the moment I saw you—in a flash. I guessed some day it might be like that—when love came. But since, I've worried considerably over that man, Harris, your partner. You never blushed for me in such heavenly fashion, Ruth."

A scarlet tide swept over her face; there came a mist like tears in her eyes. Involuntarily, he let her go, but she held his arm with both hands, looking up imploringly.

"Do you know why I blushed?"

He shook his head.

"It was because—I wonder if it will make any difference. Can't you guess?"

"How could I guess?"

He spoke almost sternly; then relented, and put both hands on her shoulders, looking deep in her eyes.

"Ruth, are you going to marry me?"

"If you will have me."

"Then all my animosity against James B. Harris melts away. Poor devil! I feel the deepest pity for him."

She made a quick movement. "You need not—he's—he's—"

"Dead, poor chap?"

"He has never been alive." She spoke very quickly, not daring to glance up. "At least, the Harris of this firm has never existed. He—he—I understood it's wiser to have a partner in business, especially for a woman. So—"

Wetherby continued to hold her very firmly by the shoulders.

"Then all the time that confounded James B. Harris has been a myth?"

She nodded shamefacedly.

"And I have suffered the sharpest pangs of jealousy for nothing?"

She looked so remorseful that, laughing a little, he swept her into his arms and held her fast.

"You'll have to be very good to me—you'll have to marry me mighty quick to make up for this."

"I will—I truly will," said Ruth. "I was afraid you'd hate me for my deceit. Even Myra thinks he is a real live man." Then, of her own accord, she leaned nearer and put her lips to his. She said nothing to him of her tall, fair rival. Perhaps she, too, was as shameless a myth as the senior partner.

IT was quite half an hour later that Miss Brown, seated patiently in a kitchen chair, saw the door open. A glance was enough.

"We want to tell you something, Myra."

"There's no need," remarked Miss Brown with her customary aplomb. "I knew—*ages* ago!"



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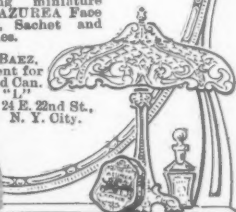
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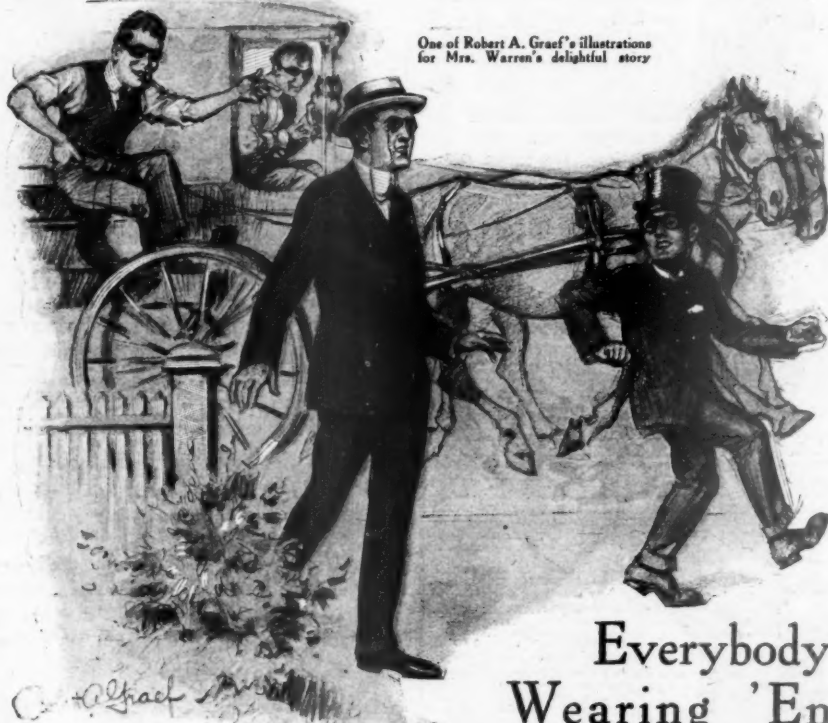
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THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

A NOVEL BY MEREDITH NICHOLSON

Continued from page 1072 of this issue.

in the Rathskeller below, waiting impatiently for Nan's return, lounged out.

He stopped short with a slightly challenging air. Eaton bowed and tugged at the visor of his cap. Copeland lifted his straw hat and muttered a good-afternoon that was intended for one or both as they chose to take it. Mrs. Copeland glanced at him without making any sign; she did not speak to Eaton again, but as they parted near the first tee and she started across the links toward the highway, she nodded quickly and smiled a forlorn little smile that haunted him for some time afterward.

Half an hour later, standing erect after successfully negotiating a difficult putt, he said, under his breath:

"By George! She's still in love with him!"

He glanced around to make sure no one had overheard him, and crossed to the next tee with a look of deep perplexity on his face.

NAN strolled through the back door of the club-house and sauntered down the veranda toward Copeland with a demure air she had practiced for his benefit. Her indifference to his annoyance at her long absence added to his vexation.

"Well, what have you been up to?" he demanded irritably. "The others skipped long ago."

"Oh, I was tired and went down to the river to rest. I'm going home now."

"You can't go home; Grace expects us to stop at her house; they'll all be there in half an hour."

"Sorry, but I must skip. You run along like a good boy, and I'll hop on the trolley. I must be home by five, and I'll just about make it."

"That's not treating Grace right, to say nothing of me!" he expostulated. "I'm getting sick of all this dodging and ducking. I'm coming up to the

house to-morrow and have it out with Farley."

"You're a nice boy, Billy, but you're not going to do anything foolish," she replied.

He found the kindness of this—even its note of fondness—unsatisfying. He read into it a scepticism that was not flattering.

"We've been fooling long enough about this; we've got to announce our engagement and be done with it."

"But, Billy, we're not engaged! We're just the best of friends. Why should we stir up a big fuss by getting engaged?"

"What's got into you, anyhow!" he exclaimed, eying her angrily. "This talk about not being engaged doesn't go. I'm getting tired of all this nonsense—being kicked about and held off when I've staked everything I've got on you."

"You mean," she said steadily, "that you divorced your wife, thinking I would marry you; and now you're angry because I'm not in a hurry about it, and I don't want to trouble Papa, who has been kinder to me than anybody else ever was—"

"For God's sake don't cry here! We've been talked about enough; I don't understand what's got into you to-day."

"I just mean to be sensible, that's all. We've had some mighty fine times, and you've been nice to me; but there's no hurry about getting married—"

"No hurry!" He stared at her, unable in his impotent rage to deal with the situation as he thought it deserved. "Look here, Nan, I can stand a lot of this Irish temperament of yours, but you're going to play it a little too far."

"My Irish temperament!" she repeated poutingly. "Well, I guess the Irish is there all right; I don't know about the temperamental part of it. A good many people call it something very different."

"When am I going to see you again?" he demanded roughly.

"How should I know! You see me now and you don't like me. You'd better go downtown and do some work, Billy; that's what I should prescribe for you. And you've got to cut out the drink; it's getting too big a hold on you. I'm going to quit, too."

Standing near the entrance, they had been obliged to acknowledge the greetings of a number of new arrivals. It was manifestly no place for a prolonged serious discussion of their future. Mrs. Harrington, whose husband's bank, the Phoenix National, was the soundest in the State, climbed the steps from her motor without seeing Nan and her companion. Until Farley retired, the Copeland-Farley account was carried by the Phoenix; when Billy Copeland took the helm he transferred it to the Western, as likely to grant a more generous credit.

Copeland flushed angrily at the slight; Nan bit her lip.

"I'm off!" she said. "Be a good boy. I'll see you again in a day or two. And for heaven's sake don't call me on the telephone; Papa has an extension in his room, you know, and hears everything. Tell Grace I'm sorry—"

"Let me run you into town; I can set you down somewhere near home. The trolleys are hot and dusty. Besides, I want to talk to you; I've got a lot to say to you."

"Not to-day, Billy. Good-by!"

EATON found Nan waiting for him at the fourth green.

"I was praying for a mascot, and here you are," he remarked affably. "I can't fail to turn in a good card. Glad to see you've taken up walking; there's nothing like it—particularly on a humid afternoon."

"Sorry to disappoint you, but I hope to catch the four-thirty for town. What are my chances?"

"Excellent, if you don't waste more than ten minutes on me. You've never given me more than five up to date. How is Mr. Farley?"

"He's been very comfortable for a week, really quite like himself. You'd better come in and see him."

"I meant to drop in often all winter but was afraid of boring him."

"You're one of the few that couldn't do that. He likes to talk to you. You don't bother him with questions about his health—a sure way of pleasing him."

"A rare man, Farley. Wiser than serpents, and stimulating. I've learned a good deal from him."

They reached his ball, that had accommodately effected a good lie, and after viewing it with approval he glanced at Nan and remarked:

"You'd better urge me to come to see you, too. It's just occurred to me that it might be well for us to know each other better. I may flatter myself; but—"

"That's the nicest thing I've heard to-day! Please come soon."

"Thank you, Nan; I shall do that, and soon."

"I met a friend of yours awhile ago," she said, "who pronounced you the greatest living man."

"Ah! A gentleman, of course; I identify him at once; he's the only person alive I fool to that extent—Jeremiah A. Amidon! I can't imagine why he hasn't mentioned his acquaintance with you. I shall chide him for this."

He viewed her in his quizzical fashion through the thick-lensed spectacles he used for golfing. In his ordinary occupations these gave place to eye-glasses that twinkled with a sharp, hard brightness, as though bent upon obscuring the kindness that lay behind them.

"I hadn't seen him lately—not since I was a child. We used to be neighbors when we were children, and he was a very, very naughty boy."

"I dare say he was," Eaton remarked, with his air of thinking of something else. "I suppose you didn't find him at all backward in bringing himself to your notice. Shyness isn't his dominant trait."

"On the other hand, he was rather diffident and wholly polite. I thought his manners did you credit—for he said you had been coaching him."

"He must be chidden; his use of my name in that connection is utterly unwarranted. He was one of Mrs. Kinney's party, I suppose—very interesting. I'm glad they have taken him up!"

He was watching, with the quick eagerness that made him so disconcerting a companion, the passing of a motor toward the club-house, but she understood perfectly that this utterance had been with ironic intent. She laughed softly.

"How funny you are! I wish I weren't afraid of you."

"I've made a careful study of the phobias, and there is nothing in the best authorities to justify a fear of me. I'm as tame as buttered toast."

"Well, it's clear Mr. Amidon isn't afraid of you!"

"I'm relieved—ininitely; I'm in mortal terror of him. He's fixed standards of conduct for me that make me nervous. I'm afraid the young scoundrel will catch me with my visor down some day; then smash goes his poor idol. I'm glad you spoke of him; if he wasn't at your luncheon,—a guess you scorned to notice,—I suppose you met by chance—"

"It was just about like that," she laughed.

"H'm! I warn you against accepting the attentions of just any young man who strolls up the river. A girl of your years must be discreet. Your early knowledge of Mr. Amidon in the loved spots your infancy knew wont save you. You'd better refer all such matters to me. Pleasant as this is, you're going to miss your car if you don't rustle. And Harrington's bawling his head off trying to fore me away. Good-by!"

With a neat stroke he landed his ball on the green and ran after it to raise the blockade. When Nan had halted the car and climbed into the vestibule, she waved her hand, a salute which he returned with a sweep of his cap.

CHAPTER III

MR. FARLEY BECOMES EXPLICIT

NAN reached home a few minutes after five. The Farleys had lived for twenty years in an old-fashioned square brick house surrounded by maples. The lower floor comprised a parlor, sitting-room and dining-room, with a library on the side. The library had been Farley's den,

where he smoked his pipe and read his newspapers. The doors of the black walnut book-cases were warped so that the contents were accessible only after patient tugging. Half the books were upside-down—and had been since the last housecleaning. The room presented an inhospitable front to literature, and the other arts fared no better elsewhere in the house. A steel engraving of the Acropolis on the dining-room wall confronted a crude print of the *Jane E. Newcomb*, an Ohio River packet on which Farley had been second mate—and an efficient one—in '69-'70.

Mrs. Farley had established in her household the Southwestern custom of abating the heat by keeping the outer shutters closed through the middle of the day, and the negro servants who still continued in charge had not changed her system in this or in any other important particular. Nan had not lacked instruction in the domestic arts; in her school vacations she had been thoroughly drilled by Mrs. Farley. Cleanliness in its penultimate relationship to godliness had been deeply impressed upon her. But Nan had never been equal to the task of initiating changes in the Farley household, with its regular order of sweepings, scrubblings and dustings, and its special days for baking. And if she had needed justification, she would have given as her excuse Farley's long acceptance of his wife's domestic routine, and the fear of displeasing him by altering it.

She ran upstairs and found Farley in his room, bending over a table by the window playing solitaire. The trained nurse who had been in the house for a year appeared at the door and withdrew. Nan crossed the room and laid a hand on Farley's shoulder. He had nearly finished the game and she remained quietly watching his tremulous hands shifting the cards until he leaned back with a little grunt of satisfaction at the end. He put up his hand to hers and drew her round so that he could look at her.

"Still wearing that fool hat! Take it off and sit down there and talk to me."

His over-bright eyes followed her

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movements with a dull, stubborn interest. His small, round head was thickly covered with stiff white hair, though his square-cut beard had whitened unevenly and still showed traces of brown. While he lay in the chair with a pathetic inertness, his eyes moved about restlessly, and his bleached, gnarled fingers were never wholly quiet.

"Let's see what you've been up to to-day?" he asked.

"Mamie Pembroke's; she was having a luncheon for her cousin."

"Just girls, I suppose?" he asked indifferently. "You must have had a lot to eat to be gone all this time."

"Well, we went for a motor-run afterward and stopped at the Country Club on the way back."

"More to eat, I suppose. My God, everybody seems able to eat but me! I told that fool doctor awhile ago I was goin' to shoot him if he didn't cut off this gruel he's feedin' me. You can lay in corn' beef and cabbage for to-morrow; I'm goin' to eat a barrel of it, too. If I can get hold of some real food for a week, I'll get out of this. I understand they've got Bill Harrington playin' golf. My God! he's two years older than I am and sits on his job every day. If I'd never knuckled under to the doctors, I'd be a well man!" The wind rustling the maple by the nearest window attracted his attention. "Open that blind, and let the air in. Things have come to a nice pass when a man with my constitution can be shut up in a dark room without air enough to keep him alive."

IT was necessary to lift the wire screen before the shutters could be opened, and he watched her intently as she obeyed him quickly and quietly.

"Been to luncheon, have you?" he remarked as she sat down. "Well, eatin' your meals outside doesn't save me any money. Those damned niggers cook just as much as if they had a regiment in the house. What did they give you to eat at the Pembroke's—the usual bird-food rubbish?"

This interest in the functions she attended was unusual; and his manner, too, was disturbing. Before his illness he had scrupulously reserved his pro-

fanity for business uses; and it was only when his pain grew intolerable or the slow action of his doctor's remedies roused him to fury that he had recourse to strong language. He allowed her to change the position of his footstool, which had slipped away from him, and grunted his appreciation as he stretched his long, bony figure more comfortably.

"Well, go on and tell me what you had to eat."

It seemed best to meet this demand in a spirit of lightness. Having lied once, it might be well to vary her recital by resorting to the truth, and she counted off on her fingers with the mockery that he had always seemed to like, the items of food that had really constituted Mrs. Kinney's luncheon.

"Grape-fruit, broiled chicken, asparagus, potatoes baked in their jackets and sprinkled with red pepper, the way you like them, romaine salad, ice-cream and cake—just plain sponge cake—coffee. Nothing so very sumptuous about that, Papa."

It had always been Papa and Mamma since her adoption. When she came home from a boarding-school near Philadelphia where she had spent two years, her attempts to change the provincial Poppa and Momma to the French pronunciation had been promptly thwarted. Farley hated anything that seemed "high-falutin'"; and having grown used to being called Poppa, his heart was as flint against the impious substitution.

"Of course there were no cocktails or champagne. Not at the Pembrokes! If all the women around here were like Mrs. Pembroke, we wouldn't have nice little girls like you swillin' liquor; nor these sap-headed boys that trot with you girls stewin' their worthless little brains in gin. What do you think these cigarette-smokin' swine are goin' to do! Do you hear of 'em doin' any work? Is there one of 'em that's worth a dollar a week? My God! between you girls runnin' around half-naked and these worthless young cubs plantin' their weak, wobbly little chins against cocktails all night, things have come to a hell of a pass. Well, why don't you go on and tell me who was at your party? Here I am,

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lyin' here waitin' for the pallbearers to carry me out, and never hearin' a thing, and you sit there deaf and dumb! Who was at the party?"

"Well, Papa, there were just seven girls, counting me: Mary Waterman, Minnie Briskett, Marian Doane, and Libby Davis, and Mamie and her guest—a cousin from Louisville. Of course there was nothing to drink but claret cup, with sprigs of mint in the glasses."

"So the Pembrokes are comin' to it, are they? They've got to have something that looks like liquor—well, they'll be passin' the cocktails before long. Claret cup dressed up like juleps; and how much did you get of it?"

"Oh, I had one glass; nobody had more, I think; there was some kind of mineral water besides. It was all very simple."

"Just a simple little luncheon, was it? Well, I suppose it's not too simple to get into the newspapers. Nobody can put an extra plate on the table now without the papers have to print it."

HE had never quizzed her like this, and his reference to the newspaper alarmed her. His usual custom was to ask her what she had been doing and whom she had seen and then change the subject in the midst of her answer. If he had laid a trap for her, she had gone too far to retreat; and while she had lied to him before, she had managed it more discreetly. She had escaped detection so long that she believed herself immune from discovery.

He began tugging at a newspaper that had been hidden under his wrapper, and her heart throbbed violently as he opened it and thrust it toward her. It was the afternoon paper, folded back to the personal and society items.

"Just read that aloud to me, will you? I may have been mistaken. Maybe I didn't get it straight. Go ahead, now, and read it—read it slow."

She knew without looking what it was; the reading was exacted merely to add to her discomfort. The newspaper was delivered punctually at four o'clock every afternoon, so that before she left the Country Club he had known just where she had been and the names of

her companions.* She read in a low, monotonous tone:

"Mr. Robert Smiley Kinney entertained at luncheon at the Country Club to-day for Mrs. Ridgeley P. Farwell, of Pittsburgh, who is her house guest. The decorations were in pink. Those who enjoyed Mrs. Kinney's hospitality were Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Towlesley, Miss Nancy Farley, Miss Edith Saxby, Mr. George K. Pickard and Mr. William B. Copeland."

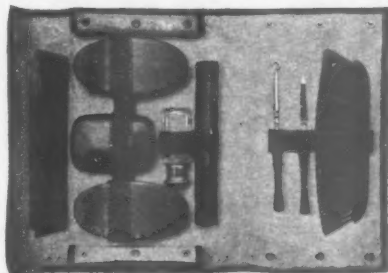
She refolded the paper and placed it on the table beside him. Instead of the violent lashing for which she had steeled herself, he spoke her name very kindly and gently, with even a lingering caress.

"I lied to you; but I didn't mean to see him again. I—"

"Let's be square about this," he said, bending forward and clasping his fingers together on his knees. "You promised me a year ago that you'd not meet or see Copeland; I didn't ask you to drop Mrs. Kinney, for I don't think she's a particularly bad woman; she's only a fool and we've got to be charitable in dealin' with fools. You can't ever tell when you're not one yourself; that means me as well as you, Nan. Now, about that worthless whelp, Copeland! I want the whole truth—no more little lies or big ones. You know that piece of carrion wouldn't dare come to this house, and yet you sneak away and meet him and leave me to find it out by accident! Now, I want the God's truth; just what does all this mean?"

His quiet tone was weighted with the dignity, the simple righteousness, that lay in him. She could have met more courageously a violent tirade than his subdued demand. She was conscious that he had controlled himself with difficulty; throughout the interview his wrath had flashed like heat-lightning on far horizons, but he had kept himself well in hand. He was outraged, but he was hurt, troubled, perplexed by her conduct. The adoption of Nan had marked a high altitude in the married life of the Farleys, and they had lavished upon her the pent love of their childlessness. The very manner in which she had been flung upon their protection

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made her advent in their household something of an adventure, broadening their narrowing vistas and bringing a welcome cheer to their monotonous existence. They had felt it to be a duty, but one that would repay them a thousand-fold in happiness.

Farley patiently awaited her explanation—an explanation she dared not make. She must satisfy him, if at all, by evasions and further lies.

"Mrs. Kinney made a point of my coming; she was always very nice to me, and I haven't been seeing her—honestly I haven't—and I was afraid she'd be offended if I refused to go. And I didn't know Mr. Copeland would be there. The luncheon was in the big dining-room, where everybody could see us. I didn't see any more of him than of anybody else. In fact, I got tired and ran away—down to the river and was there by myself for an hour before I came home on the trolley. When I got back to the club-house, they had all gone motoring and I didn't see them again."

"Left you there, did they? Well, Copeland waited for you, didn't he?"

"Yes," she admitted quickly. "But I saw him only a minute on the veranda and told him I was coming home. He understands perfectly that you don't want me to see him."

"H'm! I should hope he did! All that crowd understand it, don't they? They've been puttin' you in his way, haven't they—tryin' to fix up something between you and that loafer! Look here, Nan, I'm not dead yet! I'm goin' to live a long time, and if these fool doctors have been tellin' you I'm done for, they've lied. And if Copeland thinks my money's goin' to drop into his lap, he's waitin' under the wrong tree. Never a cent! What you got to say to that?"

"I don't think he ever thought of it; it's only because you don't like him that you imagine he wants to marry me. I tell you now that I have never had any idea of marrying him. And as for your money—it isn't my fault that you brought me here! You don't have to give me a cent; I don't want it; I won't take it! I was only a poor, ignorant little nobody anyhow, and you've been dis-

appointed in me from the start. I've never pleased you, no matter how hard I've tried. But I've done the best I could, and I'm sorry if I've hurt you. I never told you an untruth before," she ran on glibly; "and I wouldn't to-day if I hadn't guessed that you knew where I'd been and were trying to trick me into lying. You don't love me any more, Papa; I know that; and I'm going away—"

HER histrionic talents, employed so successfully in imitating him in his fury, for the pleasure of Mrs. Kinney's guests, were diverted now to self-martyrization to the accompaniment of tears. She had been closer to him than to his wife: what Mrs. Farley denied in the way of indulgences he had usually yielded. He had liked her liveliness, her keen wit, the amusing cajoleries with which she played upon him. The remote Irish in his blood had been responsive to the fresher strain in her.

"For God's sake, stop bawlin'!" he growled. "So you admit you lied, do you? Thought I had laid a trap for you, eh?"

It was difficult for him to realize that she was twenty-two and quite old enough to be held accountable for her sins. Her appeal to tears had always found him weak, but her declaration that she had suspected a trap when he began to quiz her was a trifle too daring to pass unchallenged. He repeated his demand that she sit up and stop bawling.

"We may as well go through with this, Nan. I want to know what kind of an arrangement you have with Copeland. Are you in love with him?"

"No!"

"Have you promised to marry him?"

"No!"

"Then why are you goin' places where you expect to see him?"

"I've explained that, Papa," she replied with more assurance, finding that he did not debate her answers. "I didn't like to refuse Mrs. Kinney when I'd been refusing so many of her invitations. She asked me awhile ago to come to her house to spend a week; and a little before that she wanted me to go on a trip with them, but you were sick and I knew

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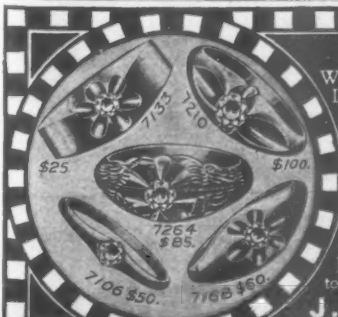
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you didn't like her anyhow, so I refused. You've got the wrong idea about her, Papa," she continued ingratiatingly. "She's really very nice. The fact that she hasn't been here long is against her with some of the older women, but that's just snobbishness. I always thought you hated the snobbishness of some of these people who have lived here always and are snippy to anybody else."

He was conscious that she was eluding him, and he gripped his hands with a sudden resolution not to be thwarted.

"I don't care a damn about the Kinneys; I'm talkin' about you and Copeland," he rasped impatiently.

"Very well," she gulped; "I've told you all there is to know about that—"

"I don't care what you say 'about that,'" he mocked; "that worthless scoundrel seems to have an evil fascination for you. I don't understand it; a decent young girl like you and a whisky-soaked, loafin', gamblin' degenerate, who shook his wife—a fine woman—to be free to trail after you. That slimy wharf-rat has the fool idea that I took advantage of him when I sold him my interest in the store—and just to show you what a fool he is I'll tell you that I sold him my interest at a tenth less than I could have got from three other people—did it, so help me God, out of sheer good feelin', because he is the son of a father who'd given me a hand-up, and I thought because he was a fool I wouldn't be just fair with him—I'd be generous. I did that for Sam Copeland's sake.

"That was four years ago, and I hadn't much idea then that he'd make good. He's already cashed in everything Sam left him but the store. And I've still got his notes for twenty-five thousand dollars — twenty-five thousand, mind you!—that he'd like damned well to cancel by marryin' you. A man nearly forty years old, who gambles and soaks himself in cocktails and runs after a featherhead, like you while the business his father and I made the best in the State goes plumb to hell! Now, you listen to what I'm sayin': if you want to marry him, you do it—you go ahead and do it now, for if you wait for me to die, you'll find he won't be so anxious;

there aint goin' to be anything to marry you *for!*"

HIS voice that had been firm and strong at the beginning of this long speech had sunk to a hoarse whisper, but he cleared his throat and uttered his last words with sharp distinctness.

"I never meant to; I never had any idea of marrying him," she said. "And I've never thought of the money. You can do what you like with it."

"Well, a man can't take his money with him to the graveyard, but he can tie a pretty long string to it; and it's my duty to protect you as long as I can. I'd hoped you'd be married and settled before I went. Your mamma and I used to talk of that; you'd got a pretty tight grip on us; it couldn't have been stronger if you'd been our own; and I don't want anything to spoil this, Nan. I want you to be a good woman—not one of these high-flyin', drinkin' kind, that heads for the divorce court, but decent and steady. Now I guess that's about all."

She stood beside him for a moment, smoothing his hair. Then she knelt, as though from an accession of feeling, and took his hands.

"I'm so sorry, Papa; I never mean to hurt you; but I know I do; I know I must have troubled Mamma, too, a very great deal. And you've both been so good to me! And I want to show you I appreciate it. And please don't talk of the money any more or of my marrying anybody. I don't want the money; I want us to live on just as we have been. You've been cooped up too long, but you're so much better now you'll soon be able to travel."

"No; there's no more travel for me; I'll be glad to hang on as I am. There's nothing in this change idea. About a year more's all I count on, and then you can throw me on the scrap-heap."

She protested there were many more comfortable years ahead of him; the doctors had said so. At the mention of doctors his anger flared again, but for an instant only. It was a question whether he had been mollified by her assurances or whether the peace that now reigned was attributable to his satis-



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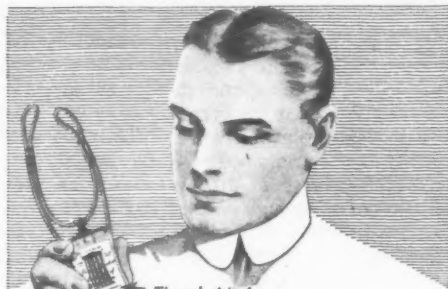


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faction with the plans he had devised to protect her from fortune hunters.

She hated scenes and trouble of any kind, and peace or even a truce was worth having at any price. She had grown so accustomed to the bright, smooth surfaces of life as to be impatient of the rough unburnished edges. It was not wholly Nan's fault that she had reached womanhood selfish and willful. In their ignorance and anxiety to do as well by her as their neighbors did by their daughters, there had been no bounds to the Farleys' indulgence.

"I'm going to have dinner up here with you," she said cheerfully, after an interval. "I'm tired of eating alone downstairs with Miss Rankin; her white cap gets on my nerves."

She satisfied herself that this plan pleased him, and ran downstairs whistling—then was up again in her room, whence he heard her quick step, the opening and closing of drawers.

She faced him across the small table in the plainest of white frocks, with her hair arranged in a simple fashion he had once commended. She told stories—anecdotes she had gathered while dressing, from the back pages of *Life*. He was himself a good story-teller, though at the age when a man repeats, and she listened to tales of his steam-boating days that she had heard for years and could have improved upon.

SOON a thunder-shower cooled the air, and made necessary the closing of windows, with a resulting domestic intimacy. The atmosphere was redolent of forgiveness on his part, of a wish to please on hers.

At nine o'clock, when she had finished reading some chapters from "Old Times on the Mississippi,"—a book that he kept in his room,—and Miss Rankin appeared to put him to bed, he begged half an hour's indulgence. He hadn't felt so well for a year, he declared.

"Look here, Nan," he remarked, when the young woman had retired after a grudging acquiescence, "I don't want you to feel I'm hard on you. I guess I talk pretty rough sometimes, but I don't

mean to. But I worry about you—what's goin' to happen to you after I'm gone. I wish I'd gone first, so Mamma could have looked after you. You know we set a lot by you. If I'm hard on you well—"

She flung herself down beside him and clasped his face in her hands.

"You dear old fraud!—there can't be any trouble between you and me, and as for your leaving me—why, that's a long, long time ahead. And you can't tell! I might go first—I have all kinds of queer symptoms—honestly, I do! And the doctor made me stop dancing last winter because my heart was going jigglely. Please let's be good friends and cheerful as we always have been, and I'll never, never tell you any fibs any more!"

She saw that her nearness, the touch of her hands, her supple young body pressed against his worn knees, were freeing the remotest springs of affection in his tired heart.

Nan wanted to be good—"good" in the sense of the word that had expressed the simple piety of her foster-mother. When she was not good, she hated herself. Her last words with Copeland on the club veranda had not left her happy. It had been in her mind for some time that she must break with Billy. She had never been able to convince herself that she loved him.

Being loved by Copeland, a divorced man rated "fast," had all the more piquancy for Nan as affording a relief from the life of the staid, colorless household in which she had been brought up. There were those, moreover, who, without being snobs, looked down just a little upon a girl who was merely an adopted child to whom her foster parents gave only a shadowy background. The Farleys were substantial and respectable, but they were not an "old family." She was conscious of this, and the knowledge had made her the least bit rebellious and the more ready to surrender to the blandishments of the Kinneys.

As she undressed and crept wearily into bed, she pondered these things, and the thought of them did not make her happy.

The next installment of Mr. Nicholson's fine novel will be in the November issue of the Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands October 23rd.

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BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

The Story-Press Corporation, Publisher North American Building, Chicago.

THE THIRTEENTH COMMANDMENT

A NEW NOVEL BY RUPERT HUGHES

Continued from page 1121 of this issue.

buying several of her gowns and hats, and she was on the glorious list of those who were invited to the first view of each new season's output—the varnishing day, as it were, of the style gallery.

Lady Powell-Beauclerc happened to be passing through her shop, and Leila introduced Mrs. Kip and Daphne to her. Mrs. Kip almost swooned, and Daphne was hard put to it to act as if she were used to meeting Ladies with a capital L.

When Lady Powell-Beauclerc learned that the exquisite Daphne was about to be a bride, she greeted her with rapture:

"You are just the child I'm looking for—color, size, everything. You shall be the first to wear my newest dream. I have two newest dreams; you may take your choice."

She proceeded to describe the costumes with an orgy of technical terms that would be tolerated from no one but a writer of nautical stories. A layman could hardly have understood a single word of it except that one of the gowns had no train at all and that the other had two.

Before Daphne could explain that she dared not choose either gown, Lady Powell-Beauclerc, like a great pianist who will either not play at all or will not stop once started, was away on a rhapsody concerning the costumes for the six bridesmaids.

These were triumphant—they included embryonic hoopskirts and more or less deprecatory pantalets. Daphne was enchanted with the vision of herself in a two-trained gown sailing down the aisle as the flagship of such a white squadron. She could have wept at the cruelty that denied her the great experience. She did not tell Lady Powell-Beauclerc that she could not afford the bridesmaids, or that she could not afford to be one of Lady Powell-Beauclerc's most exclusive brides.

Instead, she and her heartsick mother

made ready to retreat by asking the prices, discussing the details and generally comporting themselves as if they were going to buy. Among men, this same method is also used for bringing off hopelessly defeated armies; the rear guard attacks with vigor and pretends to be ready for anything, then abruptly vanishes.

Lady Powell-Beauclerc recognized the familiar symptoms, and turned them over to a saleswoman to be put out quietly.

THE three women rallied on the pavement and tried to console themselves by saying that Lady Powell-Beauclerc's ideas were ridiculous and her prices were murderous. But why rob the poor fox of the solace of calling the high grapes sour?

Daphne and her mother and Leila wandered from shop to shop like a trio of foxes, but the barriers of price were too high everywhere, or where the prices were low, the styles were lower.

At length they reached the alluring place where the famous Dutilh like an amiable Mephistophiles offered to buy souls in exchange for robes of angelic charm.

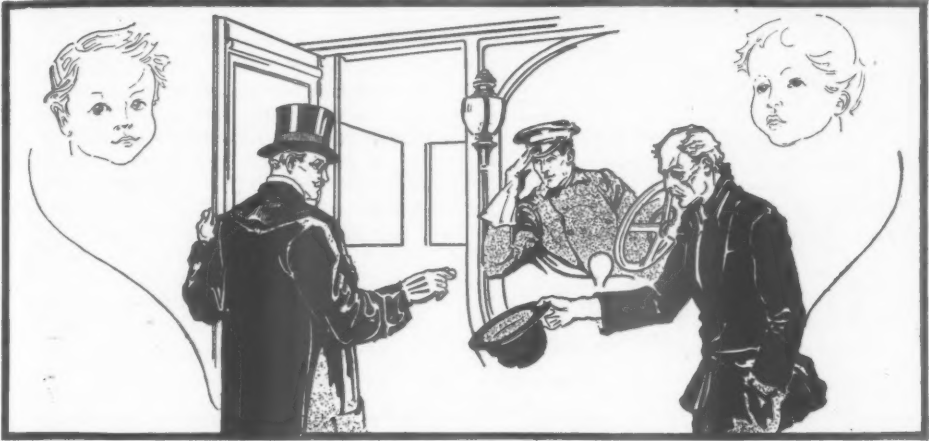
In the window, on a dummy, with no head, no feet and a white satin bust, hung a gown that seemed to cry aloud to Daphne:

"I belong to you and you belong to me! Fill me with your flesh and I will cover you with an aureole."

The three forlorn women understood the message, instantly. They looked at Daphne, at each other, then without a word they entered the shop, doomed in advance.

Leila was known to Dutilh, and he greeted her with an extravagant impudence that terrified Mrs. Kip:

"You little devil!" he hissed. "Get right out of my theater. How dare you



Partial Contents

The Law of Great Thinking.
The Four Factors on which it Depends.
How to develop analytical power.
How to think "all around" any subject.
How to throw the mind into deliberate, controlled, productive thinking.
Detailed directions for Perfect Mind Concentration.
How to acquire the Power of Consecutive Thinking, Reasoning, Analysis.
How to acquire the skill of Creative Writing.
How to guard against errors in Thought.
How to drive from the mind all unwelcome thoughts.
How to follow any line of thought with keen, concentrated Power.
How to develop Reasoning power.
How to handle the mind in Creative Thinking.
The secret of Building Mind Power.
How the Will is made to act.
How to test your Will.
How a strong Will is Master of Body.
What creates Human Power.
The Six Principles of Will Training.
Definite Methods for developing Will.
The NINETEEN METHODS for using Will-Power in the Conduct of Life.
Seven Principles of drill in Mental, Physical, Personal Power.
FIFTY-ONE MAXIMS for Applied Power of Perception, Memory, Imagination, Self-Analysis, Control.
How to develop a strong, keen gaze.
How to concentrate the eye upon what is before you—object, person, printed page, work.
How to become aware of Nerve Action.
How to keep the body well poised.
How to open the Mind and Body for reception of incoming power.
How to throw off Worry.
How to overcome the tyranny of the Nervous system.
How to maintain the Central Factors of Body health.
Difficulties in Mastering Harmful Habits.
This is only a partial list—a complete list of contents would almost fill this page.

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HERCULES POWDERS



come here after letting somebody else build your trousseau?"

Leila apologized and explained, and he pretended to be mollified as he had pretended to be insulted. He even praised the gown she wore, and told her where she got it in Paris, and how much she paid for it. Then he had its twin fetched out, and told her that she could have had it from him for less than she paid in Paris.

Having thus made the field his own, he turned to Daphne, studied her frankly with narrowed eyes and sighed:

"Oh, my God, what a narrow escape!"

Daphne jumped and gasped: "From what?"

"That gown in the window, that Lanvin that was born for you! You must have seen it. The afternoon one in parchment-toned taffeta and tulle."

The women, astounded by his intuition, nodded and breathed hard like terrified converts at a séance. He was referring to the one that belonged to Daphne, and he went on:

"There was a big fat old cow in here yesterday, that Spanish marquesa—used to be Mrs. Tim Verplanck, you know. She was simply determined to have that gown. I almost had to tear it off her back. I told her it would ruin me to have her seen in it. She tried to bribe me by offering me twice the price, but I told her to get out and stay out."

The astounding thing was that what he said was true. He was a priest of beauty and more sincere than many of the more sober cloth. His sincerity had been his success, and women loved to have him browbeat them as they love to have their physicians and their preachers browbeat them, for their own good.

The marquesa had surrendered the Lanvin gown, but she had been sufficiently impressed to buy three others.

So now he hailed Daphne as the rightful heiress and ordered her to get into it at once. She demurred:

"I'm afraid of the price. How much is it, please?"

"Don't talk of money!" Dutilh stormed. "I hate it! Let's see the gown on you." He called one of his mannequins. "Help Miss Kip into this gown."

A mournful-eyed beauty led Daphne

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into a dressing-room and acted as maid. Daphne stepped out of her street suit into the Parisian froth as if she were going from chrysalis to butterfly.

Mrs. Kip felt as if she had surrendered a mere daughter and received back a seraphic changeling. Daphne was no longer a pretty girl; she was something ethereal, bewitched and bewitching. If she could own that gown, her mother would be repaid for all her pangs, from travail on. She would accept the gown as advance royalty on any future hardships.

Daphne's joy was like steam within her, threatening either to lift her from the ground or blow her to pieces. If she had thought of it, she would have said that she knew now why women sin for such costumes. She would have questioned whether it could be a sin to claim for one's soul and body such advantage.

She looked about for Leila, but Leila was gone. She reappeared a moment later in a costume almost more delicious than Daphne's—a tunic of peach-blow tulle caught up with pink rosebuds and hanging from a draped bodice of peach-blow satin that formed a yoke low on the hips. And there was a narrow petticoat of peach-pink satin. It was as if peaches had a soul; perhaps they have.

The two girls in their differing yet rivaling charms faced each other as a dryad and a nymph might have met. They were proud to be themselves and proud to be kinfolk. Dutilh fluttered from one to the other, almost as happy as either.

Perfect happiness is said to need a bit of horror to make it complete. The happiness of the two girls did not lack that element. The price of their glory furnished it. They asked the cost with anxiousness.

"The one Miss Kip has on," said Dutilh, "the Marquesa offered me five hundred for. To Miss Kip I'll let it go dirt cheap for two hundred and seventy-five. The one Miss—er—Mrs. Kip has on I'll give away for—ummh, well—say the same price."

Daphne and her mother were sickened. Mrs. Kip put up a fight:

"Why, there's nothing to it but a little taffeta and tulle."

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HERCULES POWDERS



"There's nothing to a Raphael Madonna but a little paint and canvas," said Dutilh. "You can get a chromo of it for a dollar and a half."

Mrs. Kip answered this quickly:

"How much would you copy these for?"

Daphne winced. It was odious to discuss the subject.

"I can make you a copy of each for about half-price. But it will take some time."

"How much is half of two hundred and seventy-five dollars?" said Mrs. Kip, whose brain balked at further arithmetic.

Dutilh told her, but Daphne was suffering one of those gusts of mania that ruin people. She wanted to wear that very gown that very afternoon. A copy of it would be as disgusting as paste jewelry. Even to take it off would hurt like flaying.

Leila had the same feeling. Her appetite for resplendent gowns had grown with exercise.

"I want to wear this to-morrow afternoon," she said. "I've got to go to a tea, and my sister has to go with me."

Daphne had not heard of the tea, but she wanted somewhere to go in that gown.

Dutilh smiled: "Nothing easier. Take the duds with you or let me send them. Where are you living now?"

Leila told him the name of the apartment hive. People who live there must have a lot of money or a gift for credit.

"There's one other gown I want to show you. It might suit you better," he said. "And it's much cheaper."

He knew womankind, and he knew that they hated the unseen gown already. He left them in a mood of rebellion. They did not want anything else, especially anything cheaper. He went to a telephone in his office, called up a mercantile bureau and asked after the rating of Bayard Kip. He received the reassuring report that he was a young man of means and an unusual record for prompt payments. Dutilh learned Mr. Kip's salary exactly and the clean record that had been Bayard's pride.

Then he picked out an unattractive frock and returned. The girls turned up

their noses at it. Leila made a confession:

"The trouble is, Mr. Dutilh, that I'm just back from Paris and I haven't a cent left, and Miss Kip is buying her trousseau and has spent more already than she expected to."

Dutilh rose to the bait that he had expected to see dangled.

"Why not open an account with me? Take the gowns along and pay me when you like."

Leila hesitated and Daphne shook her head. Leila mumbled:

"I should have to ask my husband."

Daphne said:

"My father wouldn't like me to start an account."

Dutilh retorted,

"Charge it to your sister's account, then, and pay her."

But the girls played the heroine even to the taking off of the gowns and the return to their street gear. They bade the place farewell with dreary fortitude, and walked out.

But they paused on the sidewalk for a conference. Daphne groaned:

"I'll die if I don't get that gown."

Leila said: "Oh, come along! When you feel like that about anything, I always say it's a kind of an instinct that it's something you ought to buy."

Daphne saw again her father's worried look. She shook her head:

"I can't have it charged to Dad. I mustn't. I won't."

"Charge it to Bayard, then," said Leila. "You can pay him whenever it's convenient. He'd love to have you have it. Call it his wedding present."

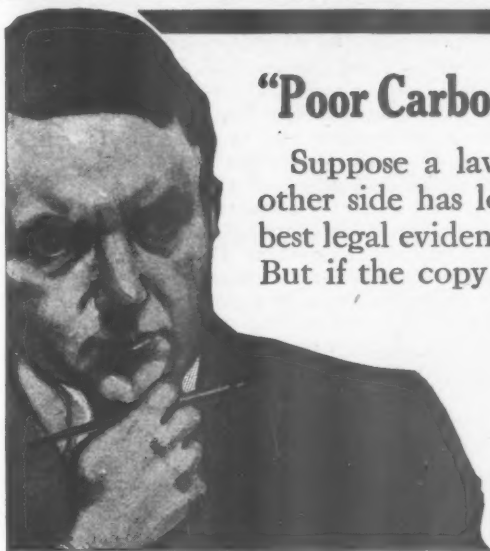
Daphne wavered in a dizzy whirl of torment. And then she saw a girl appear in Dutilh's window putting the Lanvin gown back on the form. Daphne could not bear the sight of it exposed for sale. She caught Leila's hand and they went back.

"You say you would charge them both to me?" said Leila.

"Certainly," said Dutilh.

"Send them, then," said Leila.

"Thank you. You shall have them this afternoon. And by the way, I've just remembered a marvelous design of Paul Poiret's. Let me show it to you."



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"Come quick: let's run," said Daphne, and she hurried out of the infernal paradise.

CHAPTER XV

THEY rejoined the sidewalk throngs, and Daphne's head ached with a pleasant sense of guilt.

"Where shall we go next?" said Leila the insatiable.

"Let's go home and get away from the sight of these wicked windows," said Daphne. "I'll never trust myself again."

"Couldn't we have some lunch somewhere? I'm faint," sighed Mrs. Kip, who was exhausted with emotion.

"I'll take you to the Plaza if we can get a taxi," said Leila.

"No, you won't," Mrs. Kip declared. "Let's eat at some nice quiet place. Goodness knows, we've spent enough money for one day."

They dawdled on, down the Avenue, pausing at window after window, each one flaunting opportunities for self-improvement. Daphne's joy in her new gown was turning to remorse. She was realizing that that parchment-toned taffeta needed parchment-toned stockings and slippers and a hat of the same era as the gown.

She had bought herself incongruity at a heavy price. And she wanted some jewelry, and an automobile, and two men on the box, and a garage. She was really no further along than she had been.

Rich people went by in dozens, among people who looked rich. Crested limousines were so numerous that the very mob seemed to be wealthy. Where, then, was she? the poor daughter of an anxious father, the destined bride of a young man of no bank account. Why could she not have been the daughter of a millionaire? Why could she not have loved a millionaire? Why must she look forward, as she looked backward, to a life poisoned with the money-question?

She was startled from her reveries by the sudden gasp of Leila:

"There's Tom Duane just coming out of his club."

"I met him last night," said Daphne.

"You did? Did he say he knew me?"

"He said that Bayard stole you from him."

Leila was flattered but loyal: "I never belonged to him. I never loved him, of course. It wouldn't have done any good if I had. He's a non-marrier. He's known all the débutantes for years, and most of them have flirted at him, but they couldn't get him. He has a terrific reputation for wickedness."

"He's awfully rich, I suppose," said Daphne.

"No, not rich at all, as rich people go. But he was mentioned the other day in the will of an old aunt he used to be nice to. He's nice to everybody."

Duane met them now and paused bareheaded to greet Daphne with flattering cordiality. She was greatly set up to be remembered. She presented him to her mother, who was distressed at having to meet so famous an aristocrat right out in the street when she was still flustered over the ferocious price of Daphne's new dress.

Leila spoke to him with gloating humor. "How do you do, Tom?"

"I don't know you," he said. He turned to Mrs. Kip. "You mustn't blame me, Mrs. Kip, for your son's trouble. I tried to save him by sacrificing myself, but because your son had brains and beauty, she snapped him up and left me cold."

Mrs. Kip had a vague feeling that he was whimsical and that an answer in kind was expected, but the dear soul could no more have been whimsical than a hen could be chivalrous.

"Will you have a bite of lunch with me?"

"We were just going to have something somewhere," said Mrs. Kip.

"My husband would object," said Leila.

"I'm not inviting you," said Duane. "I'm inviting the genuine Mrs. Kip. You may come along as an old married chaperon, if you have to."

"But Miss Kip is engaged."

"So I suspected. That's why I'm inviting her. I feel safe—that is, provided her mother is not a widow."

He was ashamed of this rather crude impromptu after he had uttered it, but it



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did poor Mrs. Kip a world of good. So many years had drifted by since her heart had been regarded as anything but a harmless burnt-out shell, that even a fantastic impertinence like Tom Duane's was strangely pleasant, a sudden reminder of old springtimes when she too was perilous to young men and an anxiety to her parents. She giggled, and a pitiful little blush rippled through her wrinkles. Duane caught the look and the choked laughter and was not sure whether he had been a benefactor or a brute.

He tried to make up for it by an extreme attentiveness and gallantry. He urged her to honor him and Delmonico's with her company. He said that if she wanted to shake the two younger sisters, they would elope together.

Mrs. Kip could not trust herself to bandy flirtatious remarks with Duane, and suffered him to lead them to the uptown Delmonico's, which was not far from where they were. He walked with Mrs. Kip and let Daphne and Leila follow after. Leila took revenge in telling Daphne all the gossip she knew about him. He was popular at his clubs; old ladies and children adored him; débutantes fell in love with him in vain and later treated him as an elder brother. He knew everybody of every sort from taxicab drivers to visiting princes. He was irresistibly affectionate with all the world, but apparently immune to love, to the love, at least, that ends in marriage.

He was the sort of man whose heart Daphne or any girl would have enjoyed breaking. Daphne put away the temptation, reminding herself that she was not free for such target-practice.

AS they turned east into Forty-fourth Street and entered Delmonico's, the carriage man saluted Mr. Duane, pedestrian as he was, called him by name and seemed to be happier for seeing him. The doorman smiled and bowed him in by name, and Duane thanked him by name. The hat boys greeted him by name and did not give him a check. The head waiter beamed as if a long-awaited guest of honor had come, and the captains bowed and bowed.

"You'd think his middle name was Delmonico," Daphne whispered to Leila as they followed to a table whence a card "*Reserved*" was removed with marked contempt.

Duane did not ask his guests what they would have. The head waiter told him in a low voice what he ought to have.

Cocktails were set about. A little baby carriage loaded with hors d'oeuvres was rolled up, and some of the wildest combinations that ever bewildered a palate were ladled out with little wooden spoons and forks. Daphne and Leila demanded many anchovies and ate them with such relish that Mrs. Kip, who did not include anchovies in her acquaintances, took one of the little spirals. She thought for a moment that her mouth was turning inside out. But the rest of the procession was a carnival to her.

After some hesitation Mrs. Kip had the good sense to tell Duane how delicious everything was, and he told her that she showed discrimination. He told the head waiter to tell the chef what Mrs. Kip said.

Daphne rejoiced in it, too. All luxury was music to her. Fine clothes, fine foods on fine dishes, fine horses, motors, furnitures, fine everything gave her an exaltation of soul like the thrill of a religion.

New York was heaven on earth. The streets were gold, the buildings of jasper, and the people angels; good or bad as the case might be, but still angels. She wanted to be an angel.

Among the squads of men and women camped about the little tables she made out Sheila Kemble again, in a knot of elderly women of manifest importance. They knew it themselves and were trying violently to forget it.

"Isn't that Sheila Kemble?" Daphne asked.

Duane twisted about and stared with frank awkwardness. He did so many of the things forbidden in the correspondence schools of etiquette that Mrs. Kip's standards were all askew.

"Yes, that's Sheila," said Duane, and he waved to her and she to him. He turned back to Daphne. "Awfully nice girl. Like to meet her?"



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tired*"
said he—
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said she.



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"I'm crazy to."

"I'd bring you together now, but she's completely surrounded by social dreadnoughts."

He named the women, and Mrs. Kip gaped at them as if they were a group of Valkyrs in Valhalla. It startled her to see them paying such court to an actress. She said so.

"All great successes love one another," Duane explained. "Those old ladies were geniuses at getting born in the best families, but Sheila earned her place. She looks a bit like your daughter, don't you think?"

Mrs. Kip tilted her head and studied Miss Kemble and nodded. She made the important amendment. "She looks like she used to look like Daphne."

"That's better," said Duane. "Miss Kip might be her understudy."

"How much does an understudy get?" said Daphne abruptly.

"I haven't the faintest idea," said Duane, "not much, I imagine, except an opportunity."

"Is it true that Miss Kemble makes so much?"

"I'd like to trade incomes with her. Her manager, Reben, was telling me that she would make fifty thousand dollars this year."

Mrs. Kip was aghast. Daphne was electrified. She was thinking: "We look so much alike, and our lots are so much unlike. She works and I loaf. She buys her own things—and all she wants of them. I have to rob my poor old dad to get half of what I need. If I had her money, or only a part of it, I could pay Dad back and help him out, and I could rent an apartment as fine as Bayard's for poor Clay and me. I could take burdens off people's backs, and put fine clothes on my own. And I'd be earning it. That's better than inheriting it."

She had the wholesome American idea that each generation should build up its own fortunes and that money made fresh is better than hothouse money plucked from old family bushes.

She surprised Tom Duane with another question:

"You said Miss Kemble was married."

"Yes, and has children, and loves her husband. But she couldn't stand idle-

ness. She's just come back to the stage after several years of rusting in a small city."

Daphne fired one more question point blank:

"Do you think I could succeed on the stage?"

Before Duane could answer, Mrs. Kip broke in with a rebuke: "Daphne, what on earth are you asking such questions for? You're not thinking of going on the stage?"

"I'm thinking of lots of things," said Daphne.

"But what about Clay?"

"I'm thinking of him, too," she said, and turned again to Duane. "Do you think I could succeed?"

"Why not?" he answered. "You have—with your mother's permission—great beauty and magnetism, a delightful voice, and intelligence. Why shouldn't you succeed? You would probably have a peck of trouble getting started, but—do you know any managers?"

"I never met one."

"Well, if you ever decide that you want to try it, let me know, and I'll make somebody give you a job."

"I'll remember that," said Daphne darkly.

She said nothing more while the luncheon ran its course.

THE women got rid of Tom Duane gracefully when Leila asked him to put them in a taxicab, as they had still much shopping to do. Later they went to a Tyson office to get tickets for the theater. None were to be had for the Kemble performance at any price.

They were so tired by now that they were glad of it. They rode back to the apartment. There they found a telegraphic day letter from Daphne's father to her mother.

As you see by papers big Cowper firm failed to-day for ten million dollars this hits us hard you better come home not buy anything more situation serious but hope for best don't worry well love.

WESLEY.

Mrs. Kip dropped into a chair with a groan. The shock was so great that it



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shook first from her a wail of sympathy for her husband.

"Your poor father!" she groaned. "And he's worked so hard, and been so careful."

Bayard came home late for dinner and in a state of grave excitement. The great Cowper establishment had fallen like a steeple, crushing many a house. The nine-million-dollar collapse had shaken poor old Wall Street to the foundations and shattered the pathetic dreams of approaching prosperity.

Indirectly it had rattled the windows of Bayard's firm — had stopped the banks from granting an important loan. Bayard had had a bad day downtown. He had turned homeward at last, thanking God that he had a home and an inexhaustible wealth in his wife's love. The news of his father's distress was a heavy blow. But he tried to dispense encouragement to the three women, who could not quite realize what all the excitement was about, or why the disaster of a big chain of wholesale stores should be of any particular importance to them.

Bayard was just saying: "I tell you, Leila honey, I was the wise boy when I grabbed you, for now I've got you, and I need you. We're going to win out all right, but it takes a pile of cash, and cash costs. Thank the Lord, I'm not loaded up with debts. I've kept clear of that."

The doorbell rang, and a young sewing girl brought two big boxes from Dutilh's. They were so big that there was no concealing them. Leila made a timid effort to escape with hers, but Bayard was full of a cheerful curiosity:

"What's all that, honey?"

"Oh, it's just a—a little thing I picked up to-day at Dutilh's."

"Dutilh's, eh? If I'd known you had cash enough to call on him, I'd have borrowed it myself. Let's see it. Is it becoming?"

"Daphne and your mother thought so."

"What is it, a scarf or something?" Give a fellow a look at it."

He began to untie the knot. Sealed across the cord was an envelope, enclosing a statement. Leila snatched at it. Bayard laughed and dodged her. Leila

pursued. It was a ghastly game of tag for her, and Daphne and her mother looked on in guilty dread. Bayard, whooping with laughter, dashed into his room and closed the door, held it fast while Leila pounded and pleaded with him.

His laughter was quenched sharply. There was a silence. He opened the door and walked out, a sickly pallor at his lips, the statement in his hand:

"This can't be right, honey. 'Bayard Kip to Dutilh, Debtor. 1 peachblow satin gown—two hundred and seventy-five dollars.' But I have no account there."

"He—he insisted on my opening one."

"But I don't want to open any accounts. I pay my bills in thirty days or discount them for cash. I can't pay this in thirty days—or ninety. Every penny I can see ahead of me is laid out."

"I—I'm sorry," Leila faltered.

"Couldn't you have waited till you asked me? If you had to have it, couldn't you have given me a chance to arrange for it! Couldn't you even have waited till I got home?"

"I suppose I could have. But I supposed you could afford it. Dutilh said I could pay whenever I liked."

"Agh!" Bayard gnarled. "That's the way it starts. Nobody ever paid a debt when he liked. But why couldn't you have waited—or telephoned me? You don't know how this frightens me. Two hundred and seventy-five dollars for a piece of silken foolishness at a time like this! It would keep a family for a year."

"You said the times were getting better."

"I thought they were. I hoped they were. But they've gone bad again. I was trying to cheer you up, to give you a happy honeymoon. And I bought you everything you saw abroad. And it wasn't enough. My God, when will you get enough clothes!"

LEILA had stared incredulous at the catastrophic result of her tender impulse to beautify herself in his eyes. Then tears came gushing, and she ran to her room and locked the door.

Bayard did not follow her. He

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his teeth come, a bit of hard cracker to exercise them on after his feeding.

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turned for comfort to his mother and Daphne. He noted the other box. Daphne had not dared to open it.

Bayard ripped the envelope from its cord and read:

Bayard Kip to Dutilh, Dr.

I parchment-toned gown, for Miss Daphne Kip, two hundred and seventy-five dollars.

He was parchment-toned himself as he shook the statement at Daphne, and whispered huskily:

"What's this?"

Daphne could not muster any courage. She explained with craven remorse: "I saw a gown that I—I needed there, and I—I he offered to let it go on your account till I could get the money."

Bayard was choked with wrath and a terror greater than hers.

"I go to my office and work like a fiend all day, and I come home to find that my wife and my sister have run me into debt for—for five hundred and fifty dollars. And the firm had to extend a note to-day for seven hundred and fifty because we couldn't meet it!"

He paced the floor, wringing his hands and beating his hot forehead with the heels of his hands. His mother could not help him. She saw her husband again, as he was when he was younger. He had these financial frenzies, then, too. In the course of years his protests had worn down to a wail. But he had begun with these hurricanes. And yet he had never had his own way with his own money. Would Bayard ever have his?

Bayard rounded on Daphne:

"You charged this to me till you can get the money?" She nodded. "Where are you going to get it?" She could not answer. "From Dad?" Before she could nod yes, he said: "You read his telegram, didn't you? Or are you going to get it from Clay Wimburn?" She did not answer this. "Couldn't you wait till you married him before you bankrupted him?" He flung his hands high and roared:

"Good God, have you women no other ambition except to ruin the men that love you?"

Daphne blazed with ire at this, but what could she say? Her mother tried to

stem the tide of Bayard's rage, to turn his wrath with a soft answer:

"I guess it's all my fault, honey. The dresses looked so pretty on the girls, I urged them to take them. You ought to see how beautiful they are. Go put the dress on, Daphne, and let your brother see how sweet you look in it."

Bayard flung his hands up again and laughed like a maniac, calling to some imaginary sardonic deity to share his ribald laughter:

"Sweet! She looks sweet in it! It's beautiful! And that justifies anything. Oh, Lord, what did you make 'em out of, these women!"

Mrs. Kip nudged Daphne and whispered:

"Go on, put the dress on, let him see you in it."

She spoke with great wisdom, but Daphne stared at her with derision, and edged away and spoke in a tone as biting as cold blue vitriol.

"Put it on, Mother! Do you think I'd ever wear the thing? I'll send it back to-morrow morning at daybreak. And I'll never take a thing that any man pays for as long as I live."

Bayard laughed at her over his shoulder:

"You wont take anything that any man pays for, eh? What are you going to live on?—air?"

She answered him grimly:

"There are several million women in this country earning their own living, and I'm going to be one of them."

His comment was a barking "Hah!"

She tied the broken cord about the parchment-toned dress, and her heart seemed to bleed about the thongs. She was afraid to look at the exquisitely glistening, frothy thing, so frail a thing to have come down like an avalanche on this household.

She lugged the box away to her room. Bayard flung himself into a chair and listened to the cauldron of his own hateful thoughts. Gradually they ceased to bubble and stew. He could hear now the muffled throb of Leila's grief. He resisted it for a while, sneered at it, raged at it, and then at the cruelty of the world. Then the beating of that little drum of sorrow began to call to him.

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The anger faded out of his mien, and a look of pity took its place. He fought against surrender, and for diversion opened the dress-box, and peered inside. The contents were swaddled in tissue paper, and it made a distressing noise as he unfolded it. It disclosed a chaos of soft colors, tender and pleading as a visible music. He could not understand its design, but it seemed to him that it would be very beautiful on his beautiful Leila.

His mother, watching him, saw that he was very like his father.

Leila's sobs had stopped. A lasso seemed to have caught him about the shoulders; it was dragging him to the door.

He went there at last, and listened. He heard a low whimpering, unendurably appealing. He tapped on the door and called through it.

"Leila, honey love, forgive me. I've seen the little gown. It's beautiful. You shall have it—and a dozen like it. Please forgive me and love me again. And I'll buy you anything you want. Please. Please don't keep me standing outside your door. Honey! Leila-love!"

Daphne heard him, and her bitterness was beyond words. She came out in the hall and could not forbear to taunt him as the Philistines taunted the captured Samson. She mocked him in his own words and his high-flung gestures.

"Oh, Lord, what did you make 'em out of, these men?"

He was too much abased to denounce her, and the door opening, he slipped through to take refuge with his Leila.

A MOMENT later the doorbell rang. Daphne checked the maid, whose ears had been fascinatingly entertained, and told her that if it were Mr. Wim-

burn, he was to wait outside in the hall. It was Mr. Wimburn, and Daphne went out to him. He greeted her with the zest of a young lover. Daphne gave him a cold cheek to kiss, and then pulling her engagement ring from her finger, placed it in his hand.

"Wha—what's this, Daphne?" he stuttered.

"It's your ring. I'm giving it back. The engagement is off—indefinitely."

"For heaven's sake, why? What have I done?"

"Nothing. Neither have I. But I'm going to do something."

"What you going to do, Daphne?"

"I don't know—but something."

"Don't you love me any more?"

"Just as much as ever—more than ever. And I'll prove it, too."

"Prove it by putting the ring back on."

"No! I'll never wear it again, never!"

"Well, wont you explain?"

"Not to-night. I'm too wild. You'd better go home. I'm dangerous."

"And you wont wear the ring?"

"Never! Send it back and save your money. That's what I'm going to do with what I've bought. Kiss me good-night and go, please." She left him outside and closed the door.

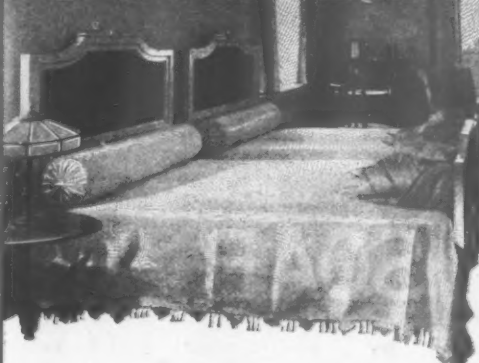
He looked at the ring with sheep's eyes, tossed it and caught it awkwardly, and laughed while he waited for the elevator. He almost spoke his thought aloud.

"Funny thing. I haven't paid for it yet. Got an insulting letter from the jeweler this afternoon."

Back in the apartment Daphne was thumbing the telephone book to see if she could find Tom Duane's number. It was not there. She determined to find him and find him secretly.

And now begin Daphne's adventures with life. She is to encounter pitfalls and perils a-plenty. Her story is absorbing. The next installment will be in the next—the November—issue of the Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands October 23rd.

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